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IN PROGRESS...

Life on the inside is a black reflection of life on the outside for prisoners (left to right) Lenore Zann, Louise Marleau and Alberta Watson.

Black Mirror

In the 1840's, La Petite Bastille, Quebec City's prison overlooking the Plains of Abraham, was a wonder of modern penal reform. It was the first prison to employ a tiered system of cells, facilitating heating and keeping tuberculosis at bay. Today, at three p.m., the solitary cells face rows of tables with brightly checkered cloths and bottles of good wine. Places are set with antipasta and wicker baskets of fresh bread. A white-hatted chef stands to the rear, behind the buffet. No, this is *not* another sandblasted restaurant with a gimmick. It's lunchtime on the set of **Black Mirror.**

Mirada Productions has occupied the prison. Editing facilities are just to the right of the main entrance, and the production office is upstairs. On his way from the set in the old courtyard commons below, the tuqued, down-vested régisseur bounds up the stairs two at a time to confer with production manager Sylvie de Grandpré. As yet, there is no publicist, and associate producer Pierre Caro (producer of **Borsalino**, and **Le vieux fusil**), disseminates project information with great selectivity. Describing the budget as "Two million...and a bit", he acknowledges that there are no internationally known stars in the picture. Of the three female leads only Louise Marleau is a veteran, and her following is mainly drawn from Quebec audiences. Alberta Watson from Toronto is in her first major feature role (she appeared in **In Praise of Older Women**), and newcomer Lenore Zann has just finished commuting between this set and Montreal to finish Filmplan's **The Fright**.

Despite the lack of "stars", this is hardly a "no frills" production. "To have one Faye Dunaway just for the investors", says Caro, "would create an imbalance. Jean Genêt is the missing star." **Black Mirror**'s screenplay, adapted from Genêt's play *Haute surveillance*, has undergone star treatment. Director Pierre Alain Jolivet collaborated on the first screenplay adaptations with Genêt himself, and also with Jean-Claude Carrière (a French writer who has worked with Luis Bunuel for the last ten years, and who wrote Milos Forman's latest film, **Taking Off**. He also wrote the screenplay for **The Tin Drum** which won the Golden Palm Award at Cannes last year.) Arthur Samuels, who has had the difficult job of turning the French script into a workable English screenplay, remains on set as dialogue coach.

The story is full of vision and allegory; everything that happens inside the women's prison is a parallel of life on the "outside". The plot centers around four women who have all spent different lengths of time inside. They hear on the radio of a bizarre murder, and devise a dangerous game: a tag of sorts, where whoever becomes "it" must kill a fellow prisoner. When the young Julie (Zann) is declared "it", and refuses to take part, her fellow prisoners force her into it.

One crew member remarks that there is a fascinating visual irony to the film. "There are all these gorgeous women, lit as if they're in a soap commercial, doing horrible things to each other."

It has taken director Jolivet two years to bring this project to fruition. Probably the most difficult task was wooing the reclusive Genêt, now 72 and suffering from throat cancer, into giving him the property rights. Fifteen years ago, Genêt had sold the rights for **The Balcony** to a U.S.

production company. Genêt considered the result so disastrous that he vowed never again to allow his works to be reproduced on film or television. Jolivet approached Genêt's agent and was told to write to the playwright. One month after sending off his request, Genêt telephoned Jolivet and asked him to come to his apartment "in twenty minutes." His one-room Paris apartment consisted of an armchair, a lamp, and a camp bed on which Genêt sat "like a Bishop." There, Jolivet managed to seduce the author with his cinematic vision, and Genêt agreed to the project — so much so, that he has had a direct input into the screenplay.

Most of the film is being shot in sequence, and the call sheets are a curious mixture of English and French. It's even more curious to see a French author, French director and French producer, in co-production with a Québécois executive producer (Nardo Castillo), filming in Quebec, with a largely Québécois crew and cast, all producing dialogue in English.

"I could not finance the film in France," says Caro, apparently because Genêt's popularity there was insufficient. "His editor said that on any $100 from book sales, $60 is from the English-speaking market (90% of *that* from that U.S.), and $15 from Japan. The remainder is from France and the rest of the world."

Caro came to Montreal and interested Castillo (head of Films 24, a successful commercial production house) in the project. From Montreal, Caro found sales interest forthcoming from PBS in the States. He and Castillo then lined up investors: "The majority are in Canada," including Canadian Film Development Corp. money. The CNC (Centre national du cinéma), France's equivalent of the CFDC, is also involved.

At first, she *makes* the dolls. In the end, Louise Marleau and fellow inmates tear them to pieces.

The film's investment package closed late in the summer — while Toronto thirsted for the sweet rains of interim financing necessary to let loose, everyone in Quebec was working. "All our candidates for D.O.P. (director of photography) were busy. But Sylvie, who had worked with Films 24, came in with a roll of Perci Young's." An engaging 34-year-old, half-Chinese and half-French, Young came to Canada from South Africa five years ago, and compiled an impressive show reel. Jolivet was convinced immediately that Young's lighting could capture *l'esprit* of the subject." This is Young's first feature.

"For style," says Caro, "the three most important people to a director are, first, the D.O.P.; second, the art director; and third, the editor. They must all understand the same vision. After that, *everyone* is important." And they're treated that way. The producer shakes the hand of the best boy and thanks him after a difficult day. Coffee and catering rate five stars in the Guide Michelin, croissants and pâté replacing the ubiquitous bagel, and the production manager understands the needs of a dozen, lovely, half-naked extras working in the cavernous cold — but then, so do the grips!

Understanding the vision is more difficult. Still, the crew say that the rushes are breathtaking; and with a little luck, this time around, Genêt's vision will lose nothing in translation to the screen.

Suzanna Plowright

Black Mirror

p.c. Mirada Productions Inc. (Montreal), P.C.P. Inc. (Paris) 1980 **exec.p.** Nardo Castillo **assoc.p.** Pierre Caro **d.** Pierre-Alain Jolivet **or. screenplay** Pierre-Alain Jolivet, Jean Genêt, Jean-Claude Carrière, from the book "Haute surveillance" by Jean Genêt **sc.** Arthur Samuels **p. admin.** Louise Dupuis **p. man.** Sylvie de Grandpré **asst. to the p.** Michel Lemay **loc. man.** Renée Leclerc, Luce Richard (asst.) **a.d.** Mireille Goulet (1st), Pierre Anctil (2nd), Jean Turgeon (3rd) **p. acct.** Jean-François Côté **p. sec.** Dominique Houle **d.o.p.** Perci Young **cam. op.** Henri Fiks **asst. cam.** Mathieu Décary (1st), Michel Bernier (2nd) **art. d.** François de Lucy, Michel Dernuet (asst.) **set dress./props.** Claude Charbonneau, Marc Corriveau (asst.), Madeleine Piché (asst.) **head carpenter** André Brochu **cost.** Huguette Gagné **ward.** Marie-Hélène Gascon **make-up** Jocelyne Bellemarre, Suzanne Savaria (asst.), Monique Paquet (asst.), Élaine Hamel (asst.) **hair** Bob Pritchett, Richard Hansen (asst.) **cont.** Brigitte Germain **sd.** Jean-Michel Rouard **boom** Eric Zimmer **chief machinist** Johnny Daoust, Emmanuel Lépine (asst.), Pierre Charpentier (asst.), Jacques Leflaguais (asst.) **chief elec.** Jock Brendis, Gary Phipps (asst.), Luc Marineau (asst.), François Aubry (asst.) **ed.** Dominique Boisvert, Christine Denault (asst.) **stills** Denis Fugère **driver** Guy Poirier **2nd unit/cam. asst.** Jean-Marie Buquet (1st), Luc Lussier (2nd), Claude Simon Langlois (3rd) **sp. efx.** Jocelyne Bellemare (make-up), Joe Elsener (guns), Gary Zeller (fire), Jacques Godbout (asst.) **l.p.** Louise Marleau, Lenore Zann, Alberta Watson, François Dorner, Carolyn Maxwell, Lyn Jackson, Septimiu Sever, Denise Hamilton, Wendy Dawson, Natasha Doo, Madeline Chartrand, Catherine Colvey, Pamela Collier, Marthe Turgeon, Jocelyne Goyette, Marie-Hélène Gagnon, Martine Fugère, Francyne Morin, Judy London, Louise Ladouceur, Georges Sirois, Jocoba Knaapen, Riva Spier, Céline Verrault.

Comics

"My feet are freezing."

"I wish I was like Miles. He has electric socks."

"What?"

"Electric socks. Socks with an element wrapped around inside. Like an electric blanket."

It's past midnight on the set of **Comics**, and there are still four more hours to go. No one ever said night shooting in Montreal during November was easy — especially when the story is set in Los Angeles. The former Pretzel Enchaîné on Clark Street has become The Funny Farm, a fictitious L.A. comedy club. Its interior is remarkable: wall-sized posters of Charlie Chaplin, Laurel and Hardy, W.C. Fields and The Marx Brothers loom high above the small black tables, cluttered with Budweiser and Miller Lite bottles that surround the tiny, empty stage upon which the comics will later succeed or fail. But tonight the shooting takes place outside in the parking lot — where the temperature is −6° Celsius.

Standing in the middle of the set, wrapped in a thick blue parka and smoking a cigar, is Ron Clark, directing his first feature film. He appears unperturbed by the cold or by the lapses in concentration his cast and crew are experiencing during their first shot back after supper. The long cover shot calls for Howie Mandel, playing a hyper comic moonlighting as a pizza delivery driver, to pull up his car on the sidewalk in front of parking lot attendant Marty Balin. After shuffling frantically up and down the stairs trying to decide whether to go inside or to deliver the pizzas, Mandel finally goes in and Balin helps himself to a snack as he parks the car in the street.

"Is there a pizza we can rehearse with?" calls first assistant director John Fretz over the megaphone.

During the first dry run, Mandel forgets to shift the car into park. With one foot out the front door, both he and the vehicle suddenly lurch backwards toward the camera. The crew crack up. "Howie," Clark quietly suggests to his actor before the next run-through, "there's also an emergency brake."

During another rehearsal, Mandel goes inside, then comes right out during Balin's action. "Don't stop until someone yells 'cut'," shouts Fretz. "I know," replies Mandel, "I just didn't want to get warm."

After several rehearsals, they're ready for the real thing. Take one is great, except, as script person France Boudreau points out, the parking sign is missing. "Someone must have forgot," says Clark calmly. After it's put back in place, they try again. This time, there is no pizza for Balin, who plays out the shot anyway with an invisible slice. Clark reacts with humor. "C'est le théâtre de l'avant-garde," he quips to the crew.

During take three, both parking sign and pizza are in place. "Good. Not great," declares Clark. "Let's do it again." He confers with director of photography René Verzier: "There are still some shadows."

Take four is a winner. Mandel, Balin, the camera, the parking sign and the pizza are all great. Ron Clark, even though he wrote the script, even though he's seen the shot nearly ten times already, even though it's cold and conditions aren't great, still laughs at the funny parts.

"I find comics fascinating," says Clark, who has lived around them for the last twenty years, writing stand-up material for Jack Carter, Buddy Hackett, and Alan King; television shows for Steve Allen, Jackie Gleason, and The Smothers Brothers; hit plays for Broadway; and films for Mel Brooks and Blake Edwards. "A profession in which you make people laugh is half noble and half crazy. The difficulties and chances of failure are tremendous."

Comics is the story of Mark Chapman (played by Miles Chapin), a kid from Cleveland who drops out of college to try to make it as a stand-up in L.A. He meets a lot of other young comics at The Funny Farm, lands a job as the club's parking lot attendant, and falls in love with an actress moonlighting as a waitress (Tracy Bregman). Mark's debut as a comic is mediocre, he becomes discouraged and thinks of going home. Instead, he tries again and succeeds. He is offered a TV series, but on the verge of this overnight success the show's producers replace him with a

On the steps of The Funny Farm comedy club, they'll do anything for a laugh: here (left to right) **Comics'** Howie Mandel, Marjorie Gross, Eugene Clark and Peter Ackroyd.

Comics

p.c. Filmplan International 1980 **exec. p.** Pierre David, Victor Solnicki **p.** Claude Héroux **d.** Ron Clark **d.o.p.** René Verzier **1st a.d.** John Fretz **p.man.** Roger Héroux **p.co-ord.** Daniéle Rohrbach **unit man.** Jean Savard **2nd a.d.** Frank Ruszczynski **3rd a.d.** Michel Sarao **loc.man.** Christine Burke **sec. to p.** Monique Legaré **admin.asst.** Mei Chan **cont.** France Boudreau **art.d.** Carol Spier, Barbara Dunphy (1st asst.), Nikki Geoghegan (2nd asst.) **set dress.** Serge Bureau, Pierre Gros D'Aillon **props mas.** Gilles Aird **set props** Jean Bourret, Michel Comte **carp.** Dean Eilertson **hair** Constant Natale **make-up** Kathryn Casault **focus puller** Denis Gingras **2nd asst. cam.** Jean Jacques Gervais **stills** Pierre Dury **gaf.** Don Caulfield **elec.** Yves Tessier **key grip** François Dupéré **2nd grip** Michel Périard **sd.** Jos Champagne **boom** Yvon Benoit **ed.** Marcus Manton, Jean Marc Magnan (asst.) **cast.** Ginette D'Amico, Elo Gallant (asst.) **drivers** Claude Delorme, Charles Toupin, Murray Ostroff **pub.** Pierre Brousseau **l.p.** Jack Carter, Eileen Brenner, Miles Chapin, Tracy Bregman, Howie Mandel, Peter Aykroyd, Gene Clark, Maurice Lamarche, Alan Riven, Marjorie Gross, Mike McDonald, Tony Molesworth, Marty Galin, Lou Dinos, Howard Busgang, Alan Katz, Briane Nasimok, Arthur Corber

more experienced comic.

"If I had to categorize it, I'd say it was the **A Chorus Line** of comics," says Clark. "It's a film about a group of ambitious young people trying to make it big. The truth of it is, most of them don't." Adds Howie Mandel: "It's not a wacky comedy — it's a *real* comedy. There's nothing in this film that shouldn't or couldn't or hasn't *actually* happened."

Comics deals with some of stand-up comedy's harsher aspects, among them the comic's greatest fear: *bombing*, failing to make the audience laugh. "Approval is so much needed," says impressionist Maurice Lamarche. "If you bomb on stage, you've only got yourself to blame." To Howard Busgang, bombing is "an empty pit of loneliness, the most lonely feeling ever. You accept it, but you never get used to it."

Paramount originally bought the rights to **Comics**, but according to Clark, they wanted to soften the script and change the emphasis. "They wanted primarily a love story about a guy who was already an established comic, which of course changes everything." Paramount and Clark parted ways amicably over the project and **Comics** lay dormant until Pierre David arrived in L.A. earlier this year, in need of a script with which Filmplan could complete a previously negotiated three-picture deal. Of the dozens of scripts he read, David liked **Comics** best. Shooting began the first week of November; the eight-week schedule included seven weeks in Montreal and one in L.A., at a budget of $3 million.

"There would have been no deal if I couldn't have directed," claims Clark. "I didn't want to explain the material to anyone else." Of his first try at directing, Clark says, "I like it. For **Silent Movie** I took the concept to Mel Brooks, and then he hired me as a production consultant. I followed that whole film through every stage — pre-production, post-production, and scoring. It was terrific training. If I hadn't done that I wouldn't dare direct."

Many of the film's young comics, Maurice Lamarche, Mike McDonald, Howard Busgang, Marjorie Gross and Tony Molesworth, were discovered at Yuk-Yuk's comedy club in Toronto. Lamarche and McDonald, along with Howie Mandel, perform original material for the film. A feature film role is a long-awaited break for many of the stand-ups. "It's like a dream come true," says Busgang. "It's something a lot of us have been waiting for."

Bruce Malloch

The Grey Fox

Director Phillip Borsos says he "just goes out and makes films."

Pretty humble words for a man who, by making **The Grey Fox**, is also turning a lot of dreams into reality. Some of them are his own — for six years, Borsos has wanted to bring to the screen the story of Bill Miner, a man with the dubious distinction of being Canada's first train robber. The fact that it's Borsos' feature film debut at age 27 is a bit incredible in itself.

On a larger scale, this $3.48 million production embodies many peoples' dreams of actualizing a feature film, a good feature film, that's a born-and-bred west coast Canadian production.

The dream-come-true spirit has infected the entire production crew since shooting started in the Rocky Mountains on October 7. Now, on location in an old alley near the North Vancouver waterfront, Richard Farnsworth, who plays the lead role as Miner, summed it up: "The weather has been fantastic. The countryside... beautiful to shoot. And the crew is so very enthused. It's just been going awful smooth."

For Farnsworth, **The Grey Fox** is providing him with "the role of a lifetime." He's been riding horses and performing stunts for the likes of Henry Fonda, Montgomery Clift and Kirk Douglas in over 300 movies since 1937. Now at age 60 Farnsworth has finally been recognized as a competent and talented actor capable of handling major roles. He was recently featured in **Tom Horn** with Steve McQueen, and was nominated for Best Supporting Actor in Alan J. Pakulas's **Comes A Horseman**.

Farnsworth more than physically resembles his character. There is something in his gentle and gentlemanly ways that echoes the legendary Miner.

"Miner was a fantastic old man," Farnsworth said. "I identified with him the first time I read the script."

Bill Pinkerton of the famous detective agency described Miner as "the master criminal of the American West." He was a curious blend of hood and Robin Hood. Even in the heat of a robbery he never forgot his manners, apologizing to passengers for the delay while he robbed their train.

After serving 33 years in San Quentin prison for robbing stage coaches, Miner was released. He then realized that his old trade was obsolete. The 20th Century had arrived, and with it the steam engine. Being a survivor, he turned his talents to train robbery. Eventually, two of his marks were Canadian Pacific trains that made their runs through the Fraser Valley in 1904 and 1906.

"His character attracted me," Borsos said. "He is out of time and out of place."

The Grey Fox picks up Bill Miner's story on June 17, 1901 — the day he was released from prison. Two exteriors centered around that day were shot in the North Vancouver alley that set designer Bill Brodie (**Superman, Barry Lyndon** and **Silence of the North**) had effectively turned into a 1901 San Francisco street. A 12-foot fence built at the bottom of the alley blocked out the 1980 traffic. Awnings, old barrels and a sign proclaiming "North Star Steam Beer" were added to existing buildings. A catwalk was built at the second-story level to block out a skyscraper that appeared in the camera's line of vision.

The first scene involved Miner walking into the shop where he bought his first gun after his release. The alley was filled

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When it came to robbing trains, the foxy Bill Minor had a major reputation (Richard Farnsworth, right) : his companions in crime are George Dawson (left) and James McLarty. Photo : Phil Hersee

with swirling machine-made fog as first assistant director John Board coached one of the extras where to walk so that he would cross Farnsworth's path at the right moment.

After checking for details (such as a wristwatch on the arm of a second extra — an employee of the fastfood restaurant that backed onto the alley) production manager Paul Tucker yelled, "Clear the alley at the bottom, please!" Crew and onlookers in woollen leg-warmers and down ski jackets scurried out of the way and the cameras rolled for three successful takes.

Half-an-hour later, cameras were set up at the bottom of the alley for the second scene — Miner's first encounter with a horseless carriage; a beautiful 1910 Buick. An onlooker appeared with his pet German Shepherd, which wandered up onto the set. Director of photography Frank Tidy (**The Lucky Star, The Duellist**) decided the dog "added a note of authenticity" and the cameras rolled.

Both the car and the dog performed admirably — the old Buick putt-putting up and down the alley for take after take, and the poor shepherd sitting patiently through the clatter of the engine and the sickening smell of artificial fog.

The idea for **The Grey Fox** has been in Borsos' mind since 1974, all the while he was producing his award-winning documentary shorts — **Cooperage, Spartree** and Academy Award nominee **Nails.**

After allying his company, Mercury Pictures Inc., with Canadian producer Peter O'Brian (**Love At First Sight, Blood and Guts, Fast Company**), John Hunter was added to the team to create a script that would "strike a balance between documentary and drama." After eight rewrites Borsos and O'Brian were happy enough to set production wheels in motion.

The documentary style of Borsos' earlier work continues through **The Grey Fox.** The film is amazingly accurate in its recounting of the Bill Miner legend. Many of the scenes were filmed on or near the spots where they actually occurred; much of the dialogue is accurate, taken from actual court transcripts of Miner's trial. The capture scene, where Miner and his sidekicks Shorty Dunn (Wayne Robson of **Popeye, McCabe and Mrs. Miller, Buffalo Bill and the Indians**) and Louis Colquhoun (David Petersen of **Skip Tracer**) were arrested, was filmed within 300 meters of the actual site near Douglas Lake.

The only substantial deviation from history is Miner's romance with Kate Flynn (Jackie Burroughs of **The Psychiatrist, If Wishes Were Horses, A Fan's Notes**), a feisty photographer from the East who wound up in Kamloops in her search for adventure.

With spirits so high and the production going "awful smooth", Borsos commented that "it's kind of depressing having only four days left to shoot."

Despite the cliché, **The Grey Fox** has been a dream come true. Its release, slated for September 1981, will be the final test of reality.

Glenda Bartosh

The Grey Fox

p.c. Grey Fox Pictures Inc. 1980 **exec.p.** David H. Brady **p.** Peter O'Brian **sc.** John Hunter **d.** Phillip Borsos **co-p.** Barry Healey **d.o.p.** Frank Tidy **des.** Bill Brodie **admin. consult.** Sandra Gould Sale **asst. to exec. p.** Linda Baca **asst. to admin. consult.** Kate McBride **p.man.** Paul Tucker **p.acct.** Elizabeth Pontsa, Victoria Emery (asst.) **p. co-ord.** Patrice Allen **loc./unit man.** Michael Steele **a.d.** John Board(1st), Mary Eilts (2nd), Tom Rowe (3rd) **p. office asst.** Wendy McGillvray **art d.** Ian Thomas, David Wilson (asst.) **construc. co-ord.** Charles Leitrants **chief carp.** Thom Wells **chief painter** Phil Morgan **scenic art.** Richard Humenick **prop. mas.** Grant Swain **prop. buyer** Bill Thumm **set dec.** Kimberley Richardson **set dress.** Ann Marie Corbett **cam.op.** Ron Orieux **key focus** Sandy McCallum **asst. cam.** Bruce Ingram **sd. mix** Rob Young **boom** Lee Walkling **gaf.** John Bartley **best boy elec.** Len Wolfe **gen. op.** Steve Jackson **key grip** Barry Reid **dolly grip** John Brown **ward.** Christopher Ryan (design), Jane Grose (asst.) **seamstress** Linda Langdon **spe. efx.** Cliff Wenger **make-up** Ilona Herman (superv.), Phyllis Newman (artist) **stills** Phillip Hersee **transp. capt.** Scott Irvine **drivers** George Grieve (capt.), Rocky Zantolas (co-capt.), Brian Boyer, Ken Johnson, Dave Bowe **head wrangler** Tom Glass **chef/driver** Shelley Heatherington **chef asst.** Kim Armstrong **craft services** Joanne Ryan **ed.** Ray Hall, Bob Boyd (asst.) **sync. ed.** Maureen Levitt **post-p. asst.** Nigel Hollick **elec.** Jerry Zawerucha **l.p.** Richard Farnsworth, Jackie Burroughs, Wayne Robson, David Petersen, Tim Webber, Gary Reineke, Samantha Langevin, Tom Heaton, Don Mackay, Heath Lamberts, Stephen Miller, Sean Sullivan, Jack Leaf, George Dawson, James McLarty, Ray Michal, Dona White, Jon York, James Defelice, Frank Turner, Angus Macinnes, David Crowley, Duncan Fraser, Bill Murdoch, Morris Pancyh, David McCulley, Jack Ackroyd, Nicholas Rice, Paul Jolicoeur, Bill Mellen, David Raines, Mel Tuck, Lisa Westman, David Ackridge, Paul Whitney, Murray Ord, Peter Jobin **pub.** David Novek Associates

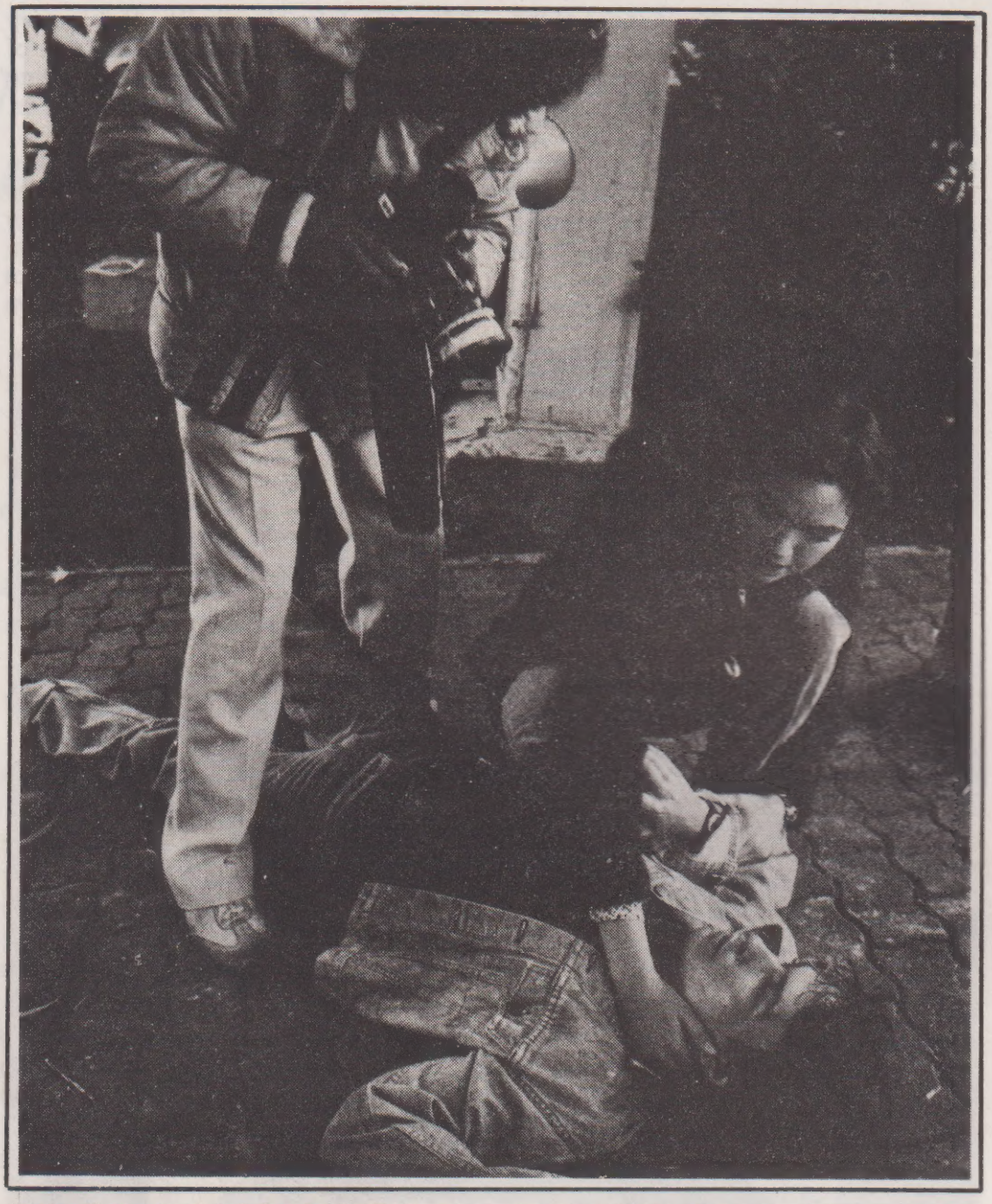
Incubus

Movie sets are notorious as breeding grounds for hostility, distrust and friction, where the competitive ego reigns supreme. On the set of **Incubus**, which has resumed filming in Lakeshore Studios after a brief shooting stint in Guelph, the atmosphere is so harmonious that the outsider feels vaguely suspicious. The cast and crew seem almost heady with high spirits; and if the production has undergone any set-backs there is no evidence of them. **Incubus** appears to be the kind of project that movie-makers dream of: a unified collection of pros have assembled with enthusiasm and panache, to work on a suspense story that means enough for them to keep mum about its surprise outcome.

An incubus is a demon who preys on mortals while they sleep. Yes, another horror film. But **Incubus**, it is claimed, will be more than just a monster pic of the bloodied-fangs-and-claws variety. In the best of monster-movie tradition, the perpetrator of evil — the occult sore spot in the characters' lives — will make a delayed appearance, prompting the viewer's imagination to help move the story along. With John Cassavetes in the lead role, director John Hough will work the story's tensions into a character-study format. And Cassavetes, whose less conventional films include the studio-bound **Too Late Blues, Faces, Husbands, The Killing of a Chinese Bookie, A Woman Under the Influence** and his recent hit **Gloria**, seems to be the right man for the job. As a director, Cassavetes has usually dealt with people lashing out against elements and situations not easily understood and difficult to accept as part of the human condition; as an actor he often appears as one who has learned to deal with many of life's harsher moments, sometimes at the expense of the soul.

The mystery elements of the story are known only to those directly involved in the production. Whether or not the film will succeed in balancing the mystery-thriller-mumbo-jumbo-character-study ingredients convincingly, remains to be seen.

Producers Marc Boyman and John Eckert seem clam-happy with everything concerned. "We have a wonderful crew here," says Eckert, who, in the ten years he has spent working in film, has worked his way up from Joe Everybody to the co-producer on both **Running** and **Middle**



Laying the groundwork for the thrills to come, director John Hough (left) rehearses Duncan McIntosh (flat out) and Erin Flannery in **Incubus**. Photo: Horst Ehricht

Incubus

p.c. Incubus Productions Inc. 1980 **exec.p.** Stephen Friedman **p.** Marc Boyman, John Eckert **d.** John Hough **p.man.** Mary Kahn **unit/loc. man** David Coatsworth **p.sec.** Sue Murdoch **p.acct.** Rosemary McCarty, Jean McDougall (asst.) **office asst.** Deborah Geaghan, Rick Williams **asst. to Mr. Boyman** Heather Waese **asst. to Mr. Eckert** Philippa King **a.d.** David Hood (1st), Louise Casselman (2nd), Bob Wertheimer (3rd) **cont.** Lisa Wilder **p. des.** Ted Watkins **art d.** Elinor Fairless Hawksley, Tom Doherty (1st asst.), Martha Fleury (trainee), Jeff Meirovici (trainee) **set dress.** Hilton Rosemarin, Robert James (asst.), Jaro Dick (asst.) **prop mas.** Dan Conley, Doug Shambrook (asst.) **ward.** Erla Lank (head) Mary McLeod (co-ord.) Ann Russell (asst.) **d.o.p.** Bert Dunk **cam. op.** Harold Ortenburger **cam.asst.** Neil Seale (1st), Kerry Smart (2nd) **gaf.** Howie Galbriath **best boy** Brian Montaque **key grip** Jon Hackett **2nd grip** Jim Krauter **make-up** Kathy Southern, Maureen Sweeney (sp. efx.) **hair** Jim Keeler **sd.** David Lee **boom** Stephen Switzer **transp. co-ord.** Bill Jackson **driver capt.** Stuart Hughes **unit pub.** Pat Whittingham **stills** Horst Ehricht **coffee person** Mary Bell **loc.contact** Don Bereziuk **casting** Claire Walker/Deirdre **extra casting** Peter Lavender **sp.efx.consult.** Colin Chilvers **ed.** George Appleby, John Schofield (1st asst.) Michael Furoy (2nd asst.) **l.p.** John Cassavetes, Kerrie Keane, Erin Flannery, Duncan McIntosh, Helen Hughes, Harvey Atkin, John Ireland, Jefferson Mappin, Mitch Martin, Jennifer Leak, Helen Udy, Beverley Cooper, Matthew Birman, Brian Young, Jack Van Evera, Denise Fergusson, Dirk McLean, Stephen Whistance-Smith, Jim Bearden, Neil Daynard, Lisa Bunting, Alan Levson, Wes Lee, Barbara Franklin, Glynis Davies, Roger Dunn, Harry Ditson, Mary Pirie, Les Rubi, Morison Bock, Derek Mitchell, Judith Grimley

Age Crazy. Boyman, the younger of the two, who spent three years in Los Angeles working as a director-producer in television, is more of a novice; **Incubus** marks his debut as a film producer, and the project is very "near and dear" to him. He is especially proud of the sets. "Don't step in the blood there," he laughs, pointing towards the patch of floor where I am standing.

Of the director, "I have enormous confidence in John Hough. We do talk story and character, but I would not think of questioning him in terms of shooting schedules, set-ups, colour schemes, whatever."

The combination of Hough and Cassavetes is an intriguing one. How does one director direct another? "It's not easy for just any director to direct John Cassavetes," admits Boyman. "If he does not respect the director, being a well-known and respected filmmaker himself... well, I hate to think of the mess. But I feel confident and comfortable with this mix of talents. I admire them both enormously. You'll find on the set an enormous amount of respect for John Hough. He commands admiration."

Kerrie Keane, a vivacious young actress in her first film role plays the female lead in the film. Asked how the influence of a man like Hough affects her performance, her eyes brighten immediately: "He has a great deal of confidence in himself," she says. "He is one of the most fascinating people I've ever worked with. Your ideas are respected on this project. I consider this film a happening. I can't think of a happier working situation."

Presently, the lighting crew is ready and Keane is off for another scene with fellow colleagues Cassavetes, Duncan McIntosh and Erin Flannery. The scene is short, calling for Cassavetes to make one grim phone call while Keane and Flannery clatter off to the kitchen set to throw some coffee on the stove. Second A.D. Louise Casselman raises her voice to request that everyone else lower theirs. After several takes Keane later admits that, "It can be confusing. Some scenes are so short and you are required to do so little; yet what little you are doing is very important, and you have to recognize the validity of the small things you do as well as the bigger moments. The confusion can be very good, but for the first few weeks I was losing sleep."

Of the incubus itself, all details are withheld. Colin Chilvers, director of special effects who worked on the Acid Queen sequence of Ken Russell's **Tommy**, and made Christopher Reeve fly in **Superman**, is nowhere to be found. Responding to my curiosity about the grotesque illustrations of some inhuman being on his office wall, Marc Boyman insists that, no, the incubus is quite different.

So, there's no peeking til next summer! The public can only hope that the film lives up to the expectations all this secrecy is creating.

Mike Leo

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Key to Credit Abbreviations

p.c. production company **p.** producer/production **d.** director **d.o.p.** director of photography **sc.** script/screenplay **ed.** editing/editor **mus.** music **sd. rec./re-rec.** sound recording/re-recording **a.d.** assistant director **asst.** assistant **loc. man.** location manager **ward.** wardrobe **cost. des.** costume design **set dec.** set decoration **cam. op.** camera operator **elec.** electrician **carp.** carpenter **special efx.** special effects **acct.** accountant **compt.** comptroller **sec.** secretary **l.p.** leading players **pub.** publicity **col.** colour **dist.** distributor.

Monkey See, Monkey Do, Monkey Pay

by Fil Fraser

"Monkey see, monkey do" sums up the present preoccupation with Hollywood film formulas – a dubious exercise that threatens Canada's *true* filmmaking potential.

If what we're doing in the Canadian feature film industry is trying to beat Hollywood at its own game, I don't like our chances. All of the highly publicized talk about "Hollywood North" is nonsensical and naive, a disservice to what *can* happen here in film. We can, I believe, create a viable indigenous film industry, which can succeed, without trying to beat them, or, for that matter, join them.

The Americans are the greatest filmmakers in the world. They know, explicitly, and sometimes cynically, how to pull all of the strings that make us laugh or cry or cringe in response to lights and shadows. They know how to push all of the buttons that bring us into darkened rooms to watch a strip of plastic being projected on a screen so large it overwhelms our disbelief and creates a magic that keeps us coming back for more.

American films succeed so well — often overwhelming indigenous films in their own countries — for two reasons. First, because they are by and large very good at what they set out to do — to entertain at a mass level. Second, because the Hollywood "major" studios have enormous power in the marketplace. The power is only partially in their ability to make superbly crafted entertainment films. What really counts is their control of a world-wide distribution system that commands the best screens and the best play dates in the world. In Canada, in Australia, and in a score of other countries, locally made films have little chance of competing successfully for screen time against the current Hollywood blockbuster.

That's the problem and the challenge for Canadian filmmakers. If, on the one hand, we are going to try to make Hollywood style movies, with the budgets and stars that go with them, then the only way to the international markets we must have to recoup our costs is through the "majors". That means that we must persuade a major Hollywood studio to "pick up" our film for distribution. They alone can commit the massive budgets, often exceeding the total cost of the production, required to promote and launch the film on a world scale. The cost of prints, advertising and promotion, transportation, executive travel and entertainment, overhead and other expenses are, of course, the first charge against revenues from the film. Add to this a distribution fee or commission in the thirty to fifty percent range, and you can see how the producer, who waits at the end of the line, can end up losing money on a picture that succeeds at the box office and makes money for the distributor. That's all right if the distributor is also the producer, as is the case with the Hollywood Majors. It's simply a matter of cost accounting. But the independent producer often finds himself caught up in the chronic round of Hollywood lawsuits in which producers, actors, and others who hoped to share in the profits, try to find out where the money went.

If, on the other hand, Canadian producers want to be truly independent and make and distribute their films outside the orbit of the Majors, we face a very different set of challenges. It bears pointing out that we do not really make Hollywood movies in Canada, even though some would like to believe so. That is not to say that Hollywood movies don't get made in this country — only that Canadians don't make them. The true Hollywood movies that are made here are controlled by Hollywood producers. Sometimes they just come to use the scenery and the relatively cheap labour. More recently, they come to work with Canadian "producers", and in addition to the scenery

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Fil Fraser is president of Fraser Film Associates. His previous experience includes 27 years in broadcasting and journalism, and the production and direction of educational and documentary films. He also served as Director of Education for both the Saskatchewan and Alberta bureaus on alcoholism, and was a moving force behind the creation of the Banff International Festival of Films for Television.

and cheap labour, get tax subsidized dollars to cover the cost of film. To make this work in terms of the taxation point system they relegate themselves to the role of "executive producers", and let the Canadians take the glory and the fees as "producers" until the film leaves the country.

The movies Canadian producers are really in charge of are too often "imitation Hollywood", peopled with stars of the second water remembered fondly by middle-aged investors who don't go to the movies anymore. They are frequently joined by expatriate Canadian actors who count for "points" in qualifying for the tax break, and who manage to get paid more for working in their native land than they can command in Hollywood. There are notable exceptions, but, by and large, the mainstream of Canadian feature film production in recent years has been the imitation Hollywood movie, in which Canadian locations are disguised to look American, and in which Hollywood "names" loom large on the marquee.

These "Canadian" films, rarely picked up for distribution by the Majors, try to compete with Hollywood alongside the so-called "independent" producers and distributors from the United States and every other filmmaking country in the world. The largest gathering of the "independents" took place this past October at Milan, Italy at the MIFED film market. No pretense of a festival, no celebration of the art and excellence of film takes place at MIFED. This is where films are bought and sold. Some four thousand buyers and sellers of film from virtually every country in the world that makes or shows movies were present. For a week they prowled through close to 200 screening facilities ranging from 35mm projection theatres seating 25 to 50, to office-sized rooms dominated by videotape players and television monitors. They were incessantly on the move through the building complex at the site of the Milan World Fair, rarely pausing to look at any film for more than a few minutes, meeting in offices, corridors, stairways, bars and restaurants — dealing, dealing, dealing. The Majors, of course, weren't there. They really are independent of the need to huckster their films this way. But the Canadians were there in force.

Fully eighty percent of the films being bought and sold at MIFED were exploitation films of one genre or another, and some of them were Canadian. There were horror exploitation films (occult blood and guts), science-fiction exploitation films (extra-terrestrial blood and guts), and, of course, plain old sexploitation films (lots of "T & A", tits and ass). The level of creativity, craft and cynicism reached new lows. Buyers and sellers expressed disgust at delights which included seeing live people seemingly fed into meat grinders; but they bought, and they sold.

The minority twenty percent of the films offered, the so-called "soft" films, included movies created by producers who believe (along with the Majors, by the way) that it's possible to tell good stories with taste, and still find an audience. And, just often enough to make it worth the considerable effort, some of them succeed. It should be a source of great concern however, that the audience for these films is being pushed out of the theatres by the narrowing segment who are being conditioned to exploitation cinema, and by the system that feeds them.

All film producers, including the Majors, feel and often yield to the call for more blood and guts and T&A, even in films meant to tell good stories entertainingly. Many producers deliberately avoid getting a "Family" rating for their films. They no longer believe in the commercial viability of that audience, having yielded the field to television. But I believe that there is a vast audience waiting and wanting to come back to the cinema, because no form of television can duplicate the magic of the big screen and an audience in a dark room. If all this suggests that the present alternatives for Canadian film producers are narrow indeed, that is absolutely the case. We cannot join or compete with the Majors. Joining the mainstream of independent producers, making films for the exploitation market, requires a toughness and a cynicism few can muster. Our best alternative is to go for quality, to become part of that small, but persistent stream of films that every year break through the system and find audiences around the world. It's the stream that has been occupied by many European films, and increasingly in recent years, by films from countries such as Australia. It's the stream where small is beautiful.

We can make small, enjoyable and successful films in Canada. Not the serious, *meaningful*, artistic films of the self-indulgent — there is no room for them in an enterprise where you risk such large quantities of other people's money — but storytelling films that are moving and fun to watch. I believe that Canadians have the tenacity and the talent to succeed. We have the landscape, we have the stories, we have the creative and technical gifts.

But we need to keep the budgets down. Forget the star wars. There's no certain magic in the big names. Recent films starring Richard Burton, Richard Widmark, Burt Lancaster, Orson Welles and others, are examples. We need to take the limousines and Lear Jets to Lethbridge out of the budgets and put the money on the screen.

We need to revise the point system that triggers the 100% write-off for investors in Certified Canadian Feature Films. Let the percentage be reduced for every foreign star, director, writer or producer (no matter what he's called) that comes into the film. Give the 100% write-off only to films that are 100% Canadian. We need to convince the unions and guilds that this is not Hollywood North, and if we try to build Hollywood salaries and perquisites into our film budgets, our chances of getting our money back, and consequently of making more films, are reduced.

Only then can we concentrate on telling stories born of our own experience, that ring with the authenticity and universality that will carry them around the world.

Finally, we need to develop our own market and turn Canadian audiences on to Canadian film. It's almost impossible, on today's budgets, for a film made in this country to recoup its costs from distribution here. But we can come much closer than we have by bringing people who love movies, but who revolt at the emotional exploitation of most current films, back into the theatres. We have the stories and we know how to tell them.

And I believe in the magic. ■

OPINION

The Boat that Jacques Missed

This commentary is *not* a vilification of Jacques Cousteau as a maker of films — although a clarification is necessary, because it *does* deal with him as a negative phenomenon, with particular regard to his recent NFB-sponsored visit to Eastern Canadian waters to make two documentary films. Admittedly, it is difficult to knock a man who has done more through film to raise the world's consciousness (and mine) towards the world's oceans than all the rest of us put together.

In fact, this really has more to do with the Canadian psyche and its passion for importing outsiders — who know *zilch* about the place — and paying them handsomely to tell us what we don't know/ should know/ might otherwise have learned about our own country.

For example, few Canadians know that there are populations of whales in the St. Lawrence River — or at least, they did not know before Jacques went on television to tell them so. I have been trying to tell them for years, with only minor success. But then, I don't have the backing (reputedly to the extent of $4 million) of the National Film Board of Canada, as did Cousteau. My approaches to the NFB, CBC, OECA and the like did not get me even four cents worth of backing, because, of course, among other things I live here.

Does all this sound like sour grapes? Yes? Well it is. You see, Jacques didn't know either that there were whales in the St. Lawrence — or at least, his New York office didn't know when it contacted me through a friend for information on who might cooperate with the pending Cousteau expedition into Canadian waters.

I don't necessarily expect Cousteau to know, of course. He is human and cannot know everything. But I do expect the National Film Board of Canada to spread a little of the largess it derives from my taxes *first* in the direction of Canadians working in their own environment.

John Stoneman of Mako Films Ltd., is second to none as a maker of underwater films. He is a Canadian. His company is Canadian and is based here. Stoneman would have been only too happy to make a couple of films with the NFB — and probably for less than half the price. Can it be that the Board's decision makers have not heard of him? I doubt it. He made the enormously successful film **Nomads Of The Deep** which ran at Ontario Place's Cinesphere for three months last summer. I have written extensively of him for *Cinema Canada*, which is presumably read by Board staff members. His films are entered in the same competitive film festivals throughout the continent, as those of the Board, and they too win awards. (Stoneman is well recognized in the U.S., of course). Further, with all due respect to the competence of Cousteau's people as filmmakers, Stoneman's work is better film.

Failing Stoneman, there is also Dr. Joe McInnis. Although he does not style himself solely as a maker of underwater films, he does produce very good work. He was responsible for the *New Wave* series which was carried on the CBC-TV network.

I take issue as well with Cousteau's approach both to making and promoting his films. A lot of it is far from positive. Recently Jacques appeared on network television to explain, for example, how a whale allowed one of his divers to ride its back (for the cameras, no doubt). This is exactly the kind of negative wave that a Cousteau event can create as it sweeps by, and which those of us who remain after it is gone, strive furiously to dampen. Whales do not *allow* divers to ride their backs in the wild. Divers ride the backs of whales, and either the whales put up with it or object. Either way the animals are stressed by the encounter, and in the case of some whales such an action constitutes blatant harassment, to be discouraged, not encouraged by a folk-figure like Cousteau.

Occasionally, however, we Canadians stand together and on our own feet, as the following anecdote illustrates.

On August 19, the 240-foot *Calypso* sailed into Tadoussac harbour on the Quebec north shore as scheduled. Two weeks later the 40-foot *Beluga* sailed in two months late, because a 40-year-old second-hand engine gave out and had to be replaced by another 40-year-old second-hand engine. I was aboard the smaller boat, and on arriving I learned that the local people were not overly impressed by the assertiveness of the French ship's crew as it stormed ashore looking for significant events to film.

In a cove not a stone's throw (as the saying goes) from the harbour a significant event was taking place. Several Canadians were quietly engaged in the underwater archaeological excavation of an 1800's shipwreck, the *Caroline*. Not a word of the wreck leaked out from the village to the *Calypso*'s crew, and the ship sailed off without the story of the boat.

In time, the Canadians will make their own film of the *Caroline* (on a shoe-string budget, of course). Perhaps, in the meantime, if they are really lucky, they may interest one of our institutions in backing their project, and a film can be made in Canada by Canadians that will leave more of us better informed about our own country.

E.M. Lynas

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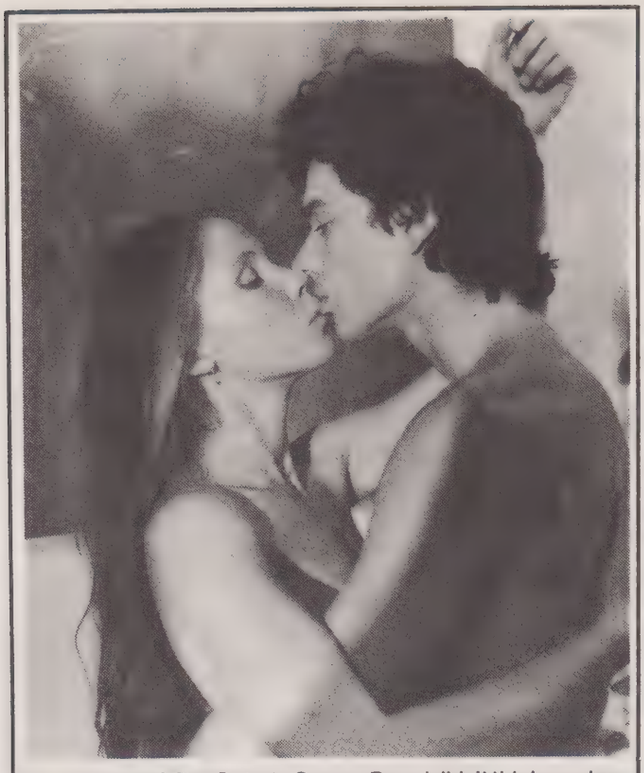
*E.M. Lynas, former editor of **Dive Canada**, is the founder of, and Director of Operations for the Ocean Research Information Society in Pickering, Ontario.*



In good taste? The Ontario Censor Board didn't think so when it requested cuts to this scene (Hollis McLaren and Michael J. Margotta) from **Partners.**

Inhibition vs. Exhibition

by Alexina Cameron

The year 1980 marks the 50th anniversary of the existence of the Ontario Board of Censors. If the controversy in past months over the award-winning film, **The Tin Drum**, *could be cited as a potential threat to the Board's continued existence, this year could well celebrate more than its birthday. Along with the plethora of opinions expressed in the various media by journalists and a concerned public on one side, is the stance of the Censor Board on the other, substantiated almost entirely by the results of opinion polls. And while the most recent poll, conducted in 1979, has received some publicity, no in depth examination of this, and the earlier 1971 poll, has surfaced in the media. What follows here is an examination of the two public opinion polls accompanied by some general observations of the Censor Board's past and present practices and its treatment of some recent films.*

In 1930 the Ontario Theatres and Cinematographs Act was passed in response to a concern about the effects of gangster films imported from the U.S. The Annual Report of the Board of Censors of Motion Pictures for 1930 reported that "The promiscuous use of firearms, not only in gangster films, but in those portraying contemporary domestic life tend to make such films unsuitable for this country where the carrying of weapons is an offense and where confidence in the law is such that the citizen is unarmed."

The Board was and is authorized to classify films, request deletions, and ban films entirely, although classification (motivated by the desire to protect children's viewing) did not become a regular feature until 1946. While the Board was aware from the beginning that it had an obligation to keep up with current public tastes and standards, it is nevertheless amusing to look back upon the types of themes and scenes that the Board took exception to almost a half-century ago. In 1936, deletions were requested to 415 films among the 2186 film subjects submitted to the Board that year, and included objections to the following:

1. *sacred religious ceremonies;*
2. *ministers of religion in equivocal situations;*
3. *blasphemous incidents;*
4. *inciting workers to armed conflicts;*
5. *objectionable prison scenes;*
6. *girls and women in state of intoxication;*
7. *reflections on medical profession;*
8. *hospital incidents treated flippantly;*
9. *suggestive and indecorous dancing;*
10. *nude and semi-nude figures;*
11. *indecorum of dress and behaviour;*
12. *themes indicative of habitual immorality;*
13. *hanging, realistic and comic;*
14. *methods of crime open to imitation;*
15. *murderous gang fighting;*
16. *cruelty to animals;*
17. *equivocal and suggestive sub-titles and speech;*
18. *excessive drinking scenes.*

More recently, film-goers began to publicly denounce the Censor Board's practices and to question its efficacy.

Alexina Cameron is a free-lance writer currently working for Environics Research Group in Toronto.

This trend seemed to gain momentum with the passing of each year, and with each new film tainted by controversy. In 1976, the Ontario Board of Censors requested cuts to a love scene in the Canadian-made **Partners**, a charming and entertaining film which later made its way onto Ontario's TV screens. To his credit, director Don Owen employed the idea of literally translating the art of one medium onto that of another: the *objectionable* scene involved love-making based on paintings of the same theme by a prominent Canadian artist. The Censors opposed the scene, in part, the media stated, because the female character takes a dominant sexual position. Reported Don Owen, "It's love-making between two partners, man and woman, and isn't your usual male dominated sex scene." Perhaps the Censors were fearful of the consequences this scene would have in Ontarians' bedrooms.

While movie-goers in Ontario may be at the mercy of the Censor Board, the Board too is not without its vulnerabilities. A fracas developed during the 1978 Festival of Festivals in Toronto over the screening of another Canadian-made film, **In Praise of Older Women**. The film's producers stated that the Censors wanted to eliminate two and one-half minutes from **In Praise**, while Censor Board Director Don Sims reported that he had no idea of the origin of the two and one-half minute figure. In the end, only 38 seconds were snipped from the film. This event is important, however, not because Sims and his confrères considered appropriate the censure of the 38 seconds, but rather because the episode was a well-planned manoeuvre on the part of the film's producers to create an atmosphere of controversy surrounding the film even before it reached the Censor's hands. A year later, Robert Lantos, one of the film's producers, admitted to *Globe and Mail* entertainment writer, Jay Scott, that he "couldn't believe how predictably (the Censors) reacted. It was fabulous — like clockwork, every move they made was what we hoped for." Not an original caper, but one guaranteed to make the film money, and if unwittingly, to further promote mistrust among all participants in the censorship debate.

Earlier in the same year Louis Malle's **Pretty Baby** was banned in toto; the film's theme (about a young girl growing up in a brothel in turn-of-the-century New Orleans) was deemed unacceptable for viewing by the Ontario public. At the time the Censor Board made its decision, North America had witnessed much concern regarding the exploitation of children in pornography. This concern undoubtedly influenced the Board's decision, however arbitrary and inconsistent that decision was: the Board had exhibited no such angst two years previously when **Taxi Driver** (a film which involved early teen prostitution) was cleared for screening in Ontario theatres.

The evidence that tipped the scales would seem to be the Emmanuel Jaques murder case (the sex killing of a Yonge Street shoeshine boy) which was in full judicial bloom when **Pretty Baby** had the misfortune to reach Ontario.

The case shocked the public and prompted a very vocal response from the Toronto community and the media in general. A long sought-after clean-up of Toronto's Yonge Street 'Strip' ensued, and with it reports of both male and female teen prostitution. Presumably the Censor Board felt it would have come under fire from various quarters had it allowed **Pretty Baby** to be shown in Ontario theatres.

However, Malle's **Pretty Baby** probably had less to say about prostitution, and teen prostitution in particular, than it did about child abuse in general. *Globe and Mail*'s Robert Martin was astute enough to ask: "What is the difference between Violet in 1917 New Orleans fetching a pipeful of opium for the addicted madame and the little boy in Toronto in 1978 fetching another beer for his alcoholic mother?"

Audiences in 1979 might have been deprived of viewing **Luna** had Bernardo Bertolucci not relented and given his assent to the cutting of scenes the Censor Board found objectionable. And most recently, the Board is demanding cuts to **The Tin Drum**, a film which was given an Academy Award in 1979 — probably the highest accolade available in filmdom.

What the Polls Say

Although Market Facts' recent *Study of Attitudes in Ontario*, commissioned by the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations, has received some publicity, little has been said about a previous survey conducted in 1971 for the Theatres Branch, then under the jurisdiction of the Ontario Department of Tourism and Information. The result of this study was an imposing and thorough body of work entitled, *Perspectives on Pornography: An Inquiry Into Public and Professional Thinking on the Subject of Celluloid Obscenity*, undertaken by a Toronto firm, Environics Research Group. Since the results of questions asked in the 1971 poll parallel those replicated in the 1979 study, we can be fairly confident that the earlier study is not yet outdated and as such continues to be a useful reading of public opinion.

Two-thirds support censorship, yet an overwhelming majority favour self-regulation.

Both of these studies indicate that Ontarians are generally in favour of the censoring of films. In 1971, two-thirds of those surveyed believed that censorship should remain the way it was, or even increased; and in 1979, a similar proportion maintained that censorship had its merits. This opinion held for both movie-goers and non-patrons, and for adults of all ages. In light of such strong support for censorship, it is perplexing to note that the 1971 study found that 84% of respondents — a rather overwhelming majority — believed that with respect to films, "every adult should be allowed to decide for himself." It appears that much of the concerned public supports self-censorship, judging from the profusion of letters submitted to local newspapers demanding the right to self-regulation.

A more careful reading of the polls reveals that Ontarians are very much ambivalent about the role of censorship. What they are effectively saying is that self-regulation is okay for themselves, but not for others.

One can only assume that the group of 'others' includes children — who, it is generally believed, must be protected from viewing material that is of too mature a nature; and

deviants, whose exposure must be restricted lest celluloid prompt anti-social behaviour. Implicit in this attitude is the kind of paternalism that has plagued the regulation of film from its very beginnings. Movies were initially perceived as family fare — working class at that — and guardians for the upkeep of the social fabric, by self-admission genteel, well-educated and worldly-wise, set out to ensure that film did not encourage the 'ignorant' masses to deviate from the prescribed norms. If class divisions seem to have foundered, paternalism, as evidenced here, most certainly has not.

Also of note was the finding in 1971 that only 46% of the sample agreed that the government should be responsible for the regulation of films; 43% reported disapproval of this system. And when respondents were asked which of the federal government, provincial government or local communities themselves should have the authority to regulate movies, 41% gave preference to the *federal* government and only 11% would authorize the provincial government to do so.

Erotica and violence in films

At the beginning of World War II the Censor Board took the position that prudence must be exercised to discourage propaganda. Consequently, most foreign films were barred in Ontario for the duration of the war. However, sex and violence in films have remained the constant targets of the Censor Board.

Scientific studies tend to find that over-exposure to filmed sexual scenes is relatively harmless, eliciting, initially, mere titillation, and eventually, boredom. The evidence is not so conclusive, however, in the area of violence. The academic community suggests that there may be an inducement to aggressive behaviour after prolonged viewing of violence on the screen. But, if such aggressive behaviour incites anti-social acts, caution should be exercised lest we mistakenly judge that exposure to filmed violence is the *sole* contributor. *Perspectives on Pornography* points out that "arousal of a deviant response depends upon exposure *plus* such intervening factors as chronological age, emotional maturity, attitudinal fixedness, personality structure, value system, social context (expectation of rewards and punishment), material context (opportunity for expressing deviance) and the nature of the stimulus."

Since demands from the public to view films that have been cut because of violent content have been virtually non-existent in the media, either the public is uninterested in viewing violence, or their viewing of a particular film which happens to contain violence has not been threatened. Because of the perceived harm of over-exposure to filmed violence, the decision to censor or not to censor violence in movies, on scientific grounds at least, is less clear. With this in mind, movie-goers who would abolish censorship must give serious thought to the subject, and realize that with abolition may come very much more screened violence than they are presently subjected to.

In 1971, Ontarians felt that of sex and violence in films, *violence* was the more serious problem of the two. This opinion is based on an objective assessment. Yet, when the issue gets nearer to home, and Ontarians are asked

which of sex and violence they would allow in a film if it was an integral element of the story, their emotional biases begin to dominate. A significantly higher proportion of respondents (79%) stated they would allow violence in a film if it was an important element of the story — 64% would allow sex that was integral to the plot.

Nearly a decade later, Ontarians are not so anxious about celluloid sex on its own (7% mention sex only as a concern), but remain concerned about sex and violence combined (37%), and violence on its own (31%). It is perhaps unsurprising that Ontarians mention sex and violence together, in that historically the two have often emerged hand in hand (eg. rape and pillage).

The proportion of Ontarians taking offense at something viewed in movies has decreased slightly over the years (38% in 1971 and less than one-third in 1979), which means that films currently produced may contain less offensive material, the public has become more relaxed in its views (or at least inured to various types of material), the Ontario Board of Censors is protecting the public more assiduously now than in 1971, or a combination of these factors.

Who is the movie-going public?

It is interesting to note that *infrequent* movie-goers comprise most of the group who state that they have been offended by something in a film. In 1971, 93% of respondents over age 55 had seen less than five films or none at all in the past year (indeed, 58% of the Ontario population over the age of 55 had *not* viewed any film in the past year); 79% of those from age 30 to 54 had viewed less than five films, and only 37% of persons 18 to 29 years had attended films so infrequently. The 1979 study also found that offense increases with age. One begins to wonder if those reporting offense have based this on actual or vicarious film-viewing experience.

The most recent poll probed for the reasons for non-attendance. "Too much sex in movies" was among the *least* mentioned responses, but was given almost exclusively by those over age 35. However, if the older age groups do not attend movies with any degree of regularity, it is highly unlikely that this inattendance is because they take issue with what the movie industry has to offer, but rather that they experience a more sedentary lifestyle than younger persons. The federal government's *Leisure Study* of 1972 also found that participation rates in activities such as live theatre, ballet, music concerts, museums and other cultural events drop as age increases.

Further, the past thirty years have seen a dramatic change in the role of the cinema in society. The introduction of television has probably been the major component effecting this change, along with greater affluence (prosperity generally renders impotent the need to seek out a fantasy world, one that depicts a life better than one's own). The cinema's survival has required that it cater to a younger audience that is interested in action and intellectual stimulation. Besides, 'family films' don't make dollars; if they did, Hollywood would supply more. Most languish in suburban malls for a week or two, then disappear into obscurity.

The Censor Board's Use of Survey Findings

The Censor Board has often pointed to survey findings to support its decisions to ban or delete portions of films. The 1971 study asked Ontarians what types of sexual scenes they "would personally object to viewing..." Incest, masturbation and oral sex were among several scenes which respondents would object to. Armed with this ammunition, the Board tends to feel fairly confident, at least some of the time, that it is complying with the wishes of the public. The Board demanded that two scenes be cut from **Luna**: the scenes pointed to an incestuous relationship between a mother and her son; in one such scene the mother masturbates her teenage son. **The Tin Drum** also drew much ire from the Censors, who took issue with four sexual scenes: in the case of one of these scenes, the Censors argued that "a young child appeared to be engaged in oral sex with a nude young woman." But it seems that the scene was open to varying interpretations, which prompted many to question its explicitness. Jay Scott, of the *Globe and Mail*, reported that "the actor playing Oskar places his face softly in a woman's nude lap."

Again the Censor Board displayed inconsistency in its decision to allow Quebec director Anne-Claire Poirier's film about rape, **Mourir à tue-tête**, to be shown uncut in Ontario theatres. Since the portrayal of rape and sado-masochism is also high on the list of depictions to which Ontarians would object, it was certainly surprising that the Board left the film untouched. Reported Jay Scott, the "film begins with a brutally humiliating attack during which a rapist urinates on his victim in close-up — no scene like it has ever been viewed legally in Ontario movie screens. The accomplished intent is to horrify, but in a different context the scene could be classified as hard-core, sado-masochistic pornography: its explicitness goes far beyond other films — **Luna, Coming Home, Pretty Baby** — the Board has previously found unacceptable in whole or in part."

The educational value of the film would seem to merit approval by not only the Censor Board, but also Toronto's Rape Crisis Centre which normally takes a dim view of the portrayal of women as victims. But could not similar claims of educational or critical worth be accorded films like **Pretty Baby, Luna** and **The Tin Drum**?

Letters to the editors of Toronto's newspapers no longer exhibit the emotional outbursts of a dissatisfied minority. Among them are intelligent and demanding movie-goers who deplore the very principle of censorship, particularly as it affects *art* films. We see in these letters too a shifting of anger directed from the Censor Board to, in part, the nebulous 'majority' of Ontarians who, the Board boasts, lend support to its policies. This division of opinion even begins to take on geographic delineations — vivacious, urban Ontario versus insular, rural Ontario.

The other direction in which blame for archaic censorship practices is being aimed is towards the Tory government of Premier William Davis. The re-routing of anger towards the head of the provincial government may in fact be a very efficacious tool for the anti-censorship group. Public opinion displayed in the media will doubtless carry

more weight than the results of any number of Ontario-wide public opinion polls. Toronto holds a pivotal position not only in the censorship debate, but also in that it contains vital electoral seats that Davis' government will be wooing in the next provincial election.

Some would contend that the government will very soon negotiate a compromise with the movie-going community, even if it bends to public pressure only enough to allow for the uncensored screening of *art* films. Although movie-goers would agree that this action would be more suitable than none, the debate would most certainly persist. Just as the Board is given the power, through The Theatres Act, to arbitrarily censor any film "that it does not approve of for exhibition in Ontario," the judgement as to what constitutes an *art* film would fall under the jurisdiction of that same Board. This is hardly an effective solution to the current debate.

The Board of Censors cannot respond to the desires of the entire population (movie-going or otherwise), and it cannot refrain from committing inconsistent censoring practices (as illustrated in the above cases). It will, however, eventually be forced to recognize that movie houses are drawing a different type of audience, upon whose favour the industry's survival depends. The cinema has become increasingly less *public*, with many of its patrons long ago lured to home TV sets. The imminence of pay TV places in further jeopardy the future of the cinema.

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Finally, there is the question as to whether or not Canadian provinces do, in fact, have the authority to ban or censor films. In 1973, a Nova Scotia journalist, Gerard McNeil, took that province's censors to court in an effort to reverse the decision to ban the movie **Last Tango in Paris**.

McNeil was convinced that since "pornography was covered by federal statutes, a provincial censor body had no constitutional right to interfere." In February of 1976 the Nova Scotia Supreme Court favoured McNeil's suit against the Nova Scotia Amusements Regulation Board with the judgement that the censorship of films does not come under the jurisdiction of provincial law. Nova Scotia's censors, in turn, appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada for their judgement.

One of the eight presiding judges, C.J.C. Laskin, ruled in favour of denying the Province's appeal, stating that:
"The determination of what is decent or indecent or obscene in conduct or in a publication, what is morally fit for public viewing, whether in films, in art or in a live performance is, as such, within the exclusive power of the Parliament of Canada under its enumerated authority to legislate in relation to the criminal law."

Another judge, J. Ritchie, was more favourably inclined towards Nova Scotia's censors. He was of the opinion that the legislation under attack
"constitutes nothing more than the exercise of provincial authority over transactions taking place wholly within the province and it applies to the "regulating, exhibition, sale and exchange of films" whether those films have been imported from another country or not."

Four members of the panel of judges concurred with Ritchie, and two with Laskin. And so, McNeil lost his case against the Nova Scotia censors at the federal level. However, as can be observed from this case, there remains some doubt surrounding the validity of provincial jurisdiction over the regulation of films.

Many laud the merit of the classification of films without censorship. Most movie-goers who propose this system do so with the opinion that the monitoring of children's viewing remains a most prudent decision. And through classification, the Board of Censors could cede to Ontario movie-goers the power to exercise their own film-viewing decisions.

Ontario's Censor Board has been abused by a publicity-hungry movie industry; it has illustrated its inability to function with any degree of consistency; the polled public (from which the Board so often likes to quote *certain* of the survey findings) not only strongly favours self-censorship, but, as we have reported, is largely disapproving of the Province undertaking responsibility for film regulation; and finally, the courts themselves experience a difference of opinion as to who should have jurisdiction over the regulation of film.

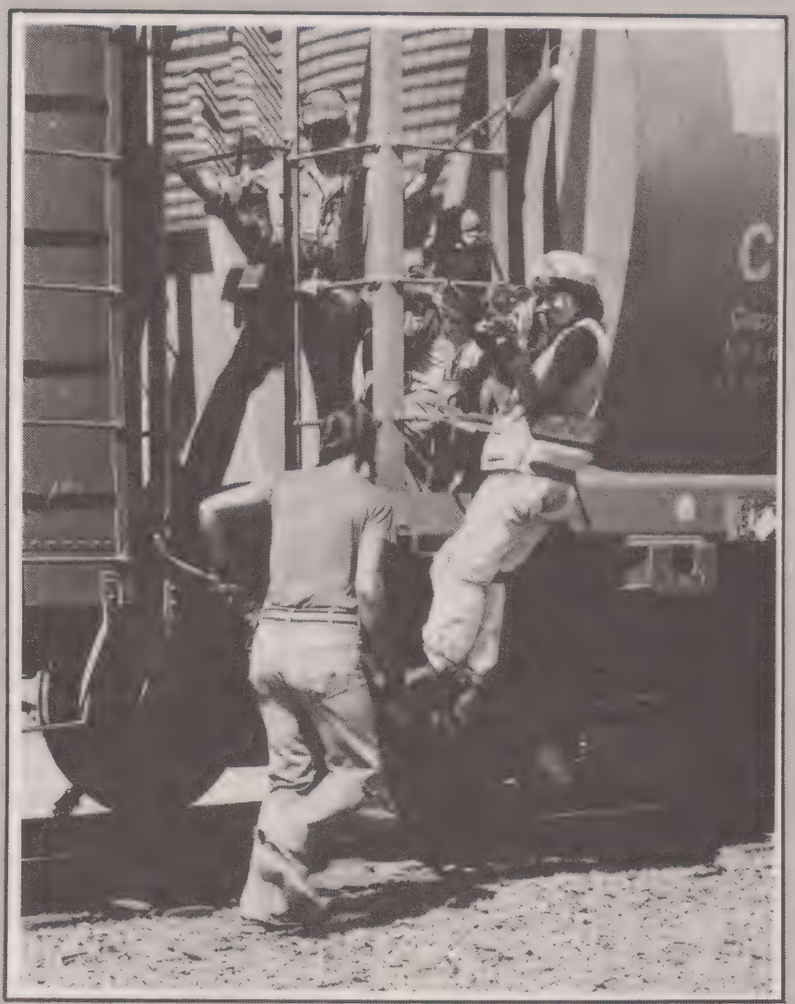
Such evidence would lead some of us to believe that censorship in Ontario is probably an inappropriate, if not undesirable, practice. ■

(Note: As reported in the **Toronto Star** *on November 26, 1980, the Ontario Censor Board passed* **The Tin Drum** *with two cuts. It opened in Ontario in December.)*

Special Section

by Barbara Halpern Martineau

Leading Ladies Behind the Camera



No soft touch for these women: here, director Barbara Tranter (left) and cinematographer Jan Martell keep track of the action.

Canadian Women Filmmakers

Canadian women filmmakers are not new — just few, and far between. Though they are seriously committed to indigenous film, their work is thwarted by the industry's male-dominated, bureaucratic structure. It is high time their efforts, and Canadian audiences, were rewarded.

There is a connection between the concepts of women *in* film and women *and* film, but the connection is neither simple nor direct. Women make films, women show films, women see films, and images of women appear in films. Women write about films, women write films, women act in films. Considering these categories, which ones seem "natural," and which strike you as more unusual? For example, how many women filmmakers, distributors, critics, and screenwriters can you name? How many in Canada? If you're proud of yourself because you can name some — and you have a right to be proud — compare those figures with the numbers of men you can name in the same categories. Compare the number of women you know who are actively engaged in film production/distribution/exhibition with the number who passively consume films, whose lives are affected by films and the attitudes they represent.

It's not that women who make films, automatically make feminist films, or even films which are sympathetic to women. It's not that men don't make films of interest and use to women. I start with the observations that most films are made by men, and most are male-centered and objectify women, often violently. From that starting point there is a long way to go towards an understanding of how this is so and what can be done. And while a fair amount has been written on the subject of women and film, very little has been written which is specific to contemporary production — hardly anything which deals with women and film in Canada.[1]

The role of women in making films, and the effect of films on women's lives, are both complex issues which vary widely according to what kind of film is being discussed.

Feature films are, for the most part, made within the film industry, and are heavily affected by marketplace considerations. Audience response (which is not the same as box-office receipts) rarely has much effect on feature production; conversely, features can play a large role in shaping popular (mainly urban) consciousness.

Television has considerably diluted the effect of theatrical features: in 1978 there were 81,597,000 paid admissions to movie theatres in Canada — a slight but steady increase from 79,020,000 in 1974, and an enormous decline from 299,312,348 in 1949, the peak year in Canada. In 1978, the national average of admissions to movie theatres was less than four per capita each *year*; in 1980, it is estimated that the average Canadian watches 22.8 hours of television each *week*. There are 8,648,800 Canadian women over eighteen — 8,507,000 of these watch television every week.[2]

Although movie attendance has declined, admission prices have risen, and in 1973 theatrical film rentals in Canada (paid by theatres to distributors) amounted to $50.8 million while TV rentals the same year were only $19.9 million. Features are still where the money is for producers. Non-theatrical rentals (mainly in 16 mm, to film societies, universities, and so on) came to $4.9 million. Across the board these markets are dominated by the United States, which received $60 million in that one year.

> *At the present time 96% of the films viewed in Canada originate outside the country, 44% of them from the U.S. Understandably, Canada is the largest foreign market for U.S. made films. It is this latter point that upsets those Canadians attempting to form a distinct Canadian cultural identity.*[3]

Documentary films are usually made for a more specific audience than features, and for a smaller market (financially speaking). The bulk of documentary production in Canada is controlled by the National Film Board, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, and government agencies which tender films through the NFB. Documentary producers tend to be concerned about audience response, so there is a potential for feminist input; also, probably because lower levels of finance are at stake, more women have access to creative positions in documentary production than in features, although the numbers remain token in both areas.

Experimental films are usually made for the satisfaction of the filmmaker and are supported by government or foundation grants. Audience response and the degree of possible women's input therefore varies from zero to 100% depending entirely on the filmmaker.

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Alternative films are defined primarily as films made outside of the institutional or commercial mainstreams which dominate Canadian filmmaking. Unlike most experimental films, alternative films tend to be politically oriented and, at least in theory are made with a high consciousness of audience needs. Alternative cinema has been an important area for feminist input and has also had effects on women's organizing in other countries. However, due to certain peculiarities of the Canadian situation with respect to educational film, we have very little in the way of alternative cinema here.

> *In the U.S., commercial producers and distributors of educational films have been given assistance from federal and state funds. Little or no such encouragement is given in Canada. Canadian producers and distributors have to compete not only with the heavily subsidized products of government agencies but also with perhaps equally heavily subsidized commercial products from the U.S. This perhaps explains why, out of some thirty educational media distributors in Canada, only five are Canadian-owned and operate on a nation-wide scale; all the others are subsidiaries of firms in the U.S.*[4]

This is another important issue. Not only do we need to distinguish between women *in* film and women's involvement with film; between mainstream features and other kinds of film; we also need to look at the effect of American domination on all kinds of film.

The overwhelming majority of feature films exhibited in Canada are American; 'our' television stations carry American films and programs (40%); our educational market is flooded with American products (60% of 16mm films held by film libraries of education systems).

Recently there has been a boom in Canadian feature filmmaking, based on a tax write-off policy of the government. Many of the new features are co-productions, carefully filtered clear of any Canadian traces; many, due to the chain-owned and block-booked system of 'Canadian' movie theatres, will never be seen by audiences in this country. So, although there will be more made-in-Canada-to-some-extent-by-Canadians features in 'our' theatres, the greatest Canadian influence on our filmic consciousness will continue to be CBC docu-dramas and news programs, and National Film Board documentaries. (The CBC English network produces 80% of its programs on film, of which only 6% is commissioned from independents, and two-thirds of the Canadian films in our educational libraries were made by the NFB.) We are colonized from the outside and institutionalized from within. The massive bureaucracies of the NFB and the CBC, like Scylla and Charybdis — the rock of paternalism and the whirlpool of 'objective' coverage — guard the entrance to our Canadian consciousness, placing in double jeopardy the fate of hapless would-be independents.

> *Both the CBC and the NFB have been the most important factors in the growth and organization of the media labour force, but their activities have tended to inhibit the growth of the private sector and its utilization of creative talents.*[5]

Most of the documentary, animated, and dramatic non-theatrical films made in Canada are produced by one of these institutions. They are also distributed by them, 'free' — having been paid for by taxpayers' money. The implications for alternative circuit-builders are enormous.

> *The Canadian market is fragmented and small, and most producers need universal distribution...in order to achieve break-even levels or profitability... Producers often put a lesser emphasis on distribution, not realizing that distribution of the product is possibly more critical than production.*[6]

Not only does the NFB distribute its own films and CBC films 'free' across the country and internationally; it also controls the production of films sponsored by government agencies, plays a significant role in determining which Canadian films are submitted to foreign film festivals, and is in charge of certifying films produced in Canada as 'educational material'. Films so certified are exempt from domestic sales tax and from customs duties when exported. In addition to the guidelines laid down by UNESCO for certification, the NFB has added some requirements of its own:

> *...the Board, by way of example, will* not *certify material:*
> *a) The primary purpose or effect of which is to amuse or entertain.*
> *b) The primary purpose of which is to inform concerning current events (newsreels, newscasts, spot news)...*
> *d) Which by special pleading, attempts to influence opinion, conviction or policy (religious, economic or political propaganda) to inculcate any dogma; to constitute a ritual or denominational service...*

Feminism :
a) the theory that women should have political, economic, and social rights equal to those of men ;
b) the movement to win such rights for women.
Feminist :
An advocate or supporter of feminism.
— Webster's Twentieth Century Dictionary, 2nd edition.

Ten years ago when I became involved with film and with feminism, I decided that there is no such thing as objectivity. (Only subjective interpretations of historical reality.) So all this while I have been working out subjective film feminisms, but with an academic background of thirty-four years trailing behind me, I tend to produce work which is sometimes interpreted as being objective. The following article, for instance, may well be criticized as an incomplete and biased account of women's filmmaking activities in English-speaking Canada. Incomplete and biased it certainly is — an account of anything other than my own attitudes and observations it is not. Those women who feel that they, or others, should have been included and were not, are encouraged to write in and make themselves known. Clearly, some system of exchange is needed through which women who are making films, and are interested in what other women are doing, could communicate. As for bias, I think it's time that we women began to assume our own voices and validate our own visions — voices and visions that have too long been muffled, darkened, suppressed. That bias, my personal view of women and film in English-speaking Canada today, runs through this account.

Barbara Halpern Martineau

h) Which it considers as not augmenting international understanding or good will, and cannot certify any material which may be perceived to lend itself to misinterpretation of Canada or other countries, their peoples or institutions.[7]

The question 'perceived by whom?' is appropriate here. To give a personal example, when I submitted the film **Good Day Care: One Out Of Ten** for certification I was informed that the film didn't really qualify as educational material because it *advocates* good day care for children. Just this time certification would be granted, but I really should keep the criteria for certification in mind for future productions.

So much for control of the market. In terms of employment opportunities:

> *Both the NFB and the CBC are perceived in the industry as heavily inbred, providing work opportunities and relatively high incomes only to the select few...*
>
> *The CBC is by far the largest employer and engager of creative talents, but spends only 11% of its operating budget for that purpose, as compared with, for instance, 35% by the British Broadcasting Corporation...*
>
> *The private television networks and stations provide only a small percentage of the work available for the creative talents...*
>
> *The cost of talent and labour in film production in Canada is 50% lower than in the United States.*[8]

The practical implications for women involved with film in Canada are clear. Colonization and institutionalization spell paternalism, patriarchy, and patronization. Collective pressure by women's groups and women in government has resulted in some response; more could be done if the mass audience of women were organized.

The philosophical implications of looking at women and film in a Canadian context are more difficult to get at. The concepts of exploring one's identity through background, of constructing filmscapes from our Canadian landscapes, of examining social issues from a personal perspective, are familiar concepts to feminists as well as to "alternative" filmmakers, female and male. These ideas tend to be associated with regional rather than national affinities, just as feminism tends to be local and international in focus, rather than national. Certainly the film producing institutions have a *mandate* to encourage 'national unity'; certainly the reality has been a tug-of-war between the centres of power in Toronto and Montreal, and the increasingly self-assertive regions. Independent Canadian filmmakers don't have a strong national network — links to the rest of the country are mainly by way of the NFB or the CBC, at least in terms of production. The Canadian Filmmakers' Distribution Centre (Toronto and Vancouver) and DEC Films (Toronto)/IDERA (Vancouver) provide a minimal national network for distribution of independents.

For feminists the primary question must be whether national identity is useful to women in challenging national patterns of oppression; if so, how can production/distribution networks across Canada be improved? To the extent that Canadian law and Canadian custom discriminate impartially against women in all provinces, a common front is important. To the extent that women in different provinces face different situations requiring different strategies, it seems important to develop awareness of those differences (which is still national strategy) and to encourage a strong sense of local identity. The clearest evidence for filmmakers that there is an unresolved problem lies in the difference between access of Canadian women's films to American markets (minimal, if the films are identifiably Canadian) and access of American women filmmakers to Canadian markets (extensive, if they take the trouble to seek distribution here).

In any case, there is value in recognizing that we, as women, have in this country a history and a contemporary context of women working in film production. While it's true that comparatively few women have had significant input, and even fewer have taken an active stand on issues of concern to women, still we have had input and experiences which have been ignored for too long. Ignorance of our own presence in history has been crippling for us all.

Our Presence in History

Nell Shipman (1892-1970) was the first Canadian woman filmmaker. She was born in Victoria, B.C., became a vaudeville actress as a child, emigrated as a young girl to the U.S., and became, like her compatriot Mary Pickford, a star of the Hollywood silent screen. Nell Barham married the Canadian entrepreneur Ernest Shipman and worked with him in the production of a series of successful features, in which Nell not only starred and performed her own stunts but also wrote the scripts and worked at different times as photographer, director, and producer. She loved the Canadian West and the North, and schemed to have films shot on location in 'God's Country.'

Nell Shipman wrote the script, played the lead role, and had considerable creative input into **Back to God's Country** (Canada, 1919), of which the National Film Archive in Ottawa has a master print. Ernest Shipman was the producer, and David M. Hartford is credited with direction. The film is a classic Canadian melodrama, with extraordinary scenes of Nell playing with bear cubs and porcupines, diving into a raging river to save her father, and flourishing a pistol as she urges her dog team across the frozen tundra to save her ailing husband and her own honour. In her autobiography *The Silent Screen and My Talking Heart* (unpublished, written in 1925, Nell described her work on the film:

> *In* **Back to God's Country**...*sitting on the floor, leaning against a large plain door of dark wood, I was to dream of my Northwoods home and my wild animal friends. The lensman genius, Joe Walker, went along with my notion. I claimed that people did not dream clean-cut, single visions but mixtures. I wanted the wilderness inhabitants to blend in and out, here a wolf, there a bear, over in a tree a cougar, a raccoon washing his dinner in a stream, squirrels popping in and out, bobcats peering, porcupines bristling, all of them dissolving in montage against the dark background while I, at the bottom of the*

The Arctic was "God's country" for the spirited, filmmaking pioneer, Nell Shipman.

frame, dreamed it. It was the most difficult double exposure ever attempted. ...There were numbers of takes, covering shots where one or no more than three animals would dissolve above my dreaming head, but the topper was to have a total of twenty-eight animal characters. Starting that strip of negative it meant that at a future date, when we were on the Kern River location along with the zoo, the film would pass the aperture twenty-nine times. If you'll consider the gross area of .35mm film and mentally cover it section by section with pinpoint spaces upon which each image was to show, you've a notion what Joe Walker was attempting. I doubt a computer could master it today. The tiny scenes had to come in and out, not overlapping each other but in a patchwork pattern. Anything could go wrong — a buckle, tear or miscount, lab trouble in the developing, a bad animal actor in a take — and no re-takes — light which did not match the overall scene; a thousand to one chances for success. But A Dream! More real than reality, to be pointed up by an obsequious caption: 'Dolores Dreams of her Forest Friends.'

The script of **Back to God's Country** was based on the short story (by the popular writer James Oliver Curwood), *Wapi the Walrus*, which gives much more time to the dog and much less to the woman than Shipman's script. She recounts their first meeting:

James, though not physically a brawny stalwart, was publicized as a big, out-door Game Hunter. Huge bearskins adorned his backgrounds and I'd a still of him with his foot on the head of a slain Grizzly — a picture I did not admire very much. But I did not mention my dislike of hunting as we squared away that afternoon in Calgary, the pencil-slashed pages of my script in his hands. 'Now, right here at the beginning,' he said, snarling a bit, 'is the first error. You say "Iris in." There is no character in my story named Iris.'

Thanks to poker training my face remained blank. I gently explained the technical term, illustrating with my fingers how the iris on the camera lens opens, flower-like, on Scene 1. ...He listened more quietly and with growing enthusiasm we went through the script, typed page and scrawled annotation. One by one these were brushed aside as he began to develop the action author-wise. The Girl did not simply look at the man who would rape her as she came naked from a forest pool. She trembled. Her fluttering hands clothed her heaving bosom, tears, like spilled opals, coursed her pale cheeks and her hair, her bountiful, glorious hair, glistened wet from her swim with her pet bear and flowed about her alabaster shoulders like a protective mantle.

When Star and Author came from the session, arm in arm, the news of the unification was shouted to the anxious management and the worried director. 'We've added a million dollars to the picture!' cried James Oliver Curwood.

It was half a million that 'the picture' was to gross in its first year, thus becoming Canada's most successful feature. Six years later, having parted company with both Curwood and Shipman, Nell was in Priest Lake, Idaho, with her 'zoo,' working on a different scale.

By now the 'Star' image had faded. I was a woman who ran a Camp and sometimes made moving pictures. We used the Lone Star Ranch, eleven miles away, for a locale for one of the little pictures and Belle acted for us, in a bed, playing a sick neighbour for whom we must fetch a doctor. The slender plots

were woven about such incidents — how we overcame obstacles aided by the animals and friendly humans...But Pathé turned down our first two-reeler...they expressed interest when it was announced I was making a series of out-door pictures, but were disappointed when 'Trail of the Northwind' was screened. There was no villain except Nature on the rampage. No sex. I remember what Doc Graff had said when a Heavy drooled behind a tree, looking at Our Nell: 'I vant it and I vant it now!' and I wondered if audiences would not enjoy a respite from sexpot pursuit.

In the little picture, Barry (Nell's son) rode to the rescue of our stricken neighbor, Belle, on our huge mule. This animal was so big the boy had to climb aboard by shinnying up a foreleg. On a trail wither deep in drifts they came to a deadfall...and Barry stepped over it, bursting through the mounded snow like a clown coming out of a hoop and regaining his enormous steed on the other side. A simple enough piece of business, but, in the frame of white bending the graceful cedars, the low light sparkling on cones and twigs, bark, moss and powdery snow, in the patiently plodding bulk of the mule and the serious intent of the small actor, I thought there was something which made a moving picture.

Another sequence showed me driving the dogs across bad ice, Barry in the toboggan. We came to an open space where black water seeped. I was afraid the lead-dog might balk and the load go under, but one after the other they jumped, harness taut. The small sled bridged the gap and I followed, only wetting my mukluks as the crunching ice sloughed off. Not much of a scene, I suppose, but it was real. We did it. The camera caught it. But the exhibitors and Pathé wanted the menace to be a man.

In 1925 Nell's production company in Priest Lake was dissolved. This was a time when independents both in Canada and the U.S. were being squeezed out of the movie-making scene by the rising Hollywood monopolies. Of the handful of women directors who had built Hollywood careers in the twenties, only one, Dorothy Arzner, survived as a filmmaker into the thirties. Nell Shipman did not make any more films, but she continued to write, and maintained an active interest in the film industry.[9]

Apart from Nell Shipman, the history of women as filmmakers in Canada begins with the formation of the National Film Board and revolves around the figure of a short, fiery-tempered Scotsman, John Grierson, whose influence on Canadian filmmaking was enormous. Grierson came to Canada in 1939 and left in 1945, having founded and defended the amazing institution known as the National Film Board of Canada, from which the traditions of Canadian documentary and animated film have evolved.

Gudrun Bjerring (later Parker)...had started work on the Winnipeg Free Press. One of her assignments was to interview distinguished visitors, and one of these turned out to be John Grierson. It soon turned out to be an interview in reverse, with Grierson asking all the questions. The upshot of it was that Grierson offered her a job with the fledgling National Film Board. ...At Halloween a party was held and someone told Gudrun Bjerring that it was a costume affair. She arrived to find the party going strong, but no one else in costume. Embarrassed and angry, she ran into Grierson, who casually asked her how things were going. She said she wanted to make a film herself. Grierson calmly said, 'Why don't you?' The next day she visited Dr. Pett of the Department of National Health and Welfare. Over the inevitable tomato juice which he served, she explained she wanted to make a film on nutrition. They decided four short films on vitamins would be wonderful. With Judy Crawley, she set out and shot the material. She edited it into cutting copies and prepared rough commentaries.

*A few weeks after the party, Grierson asked her if she had a script yet, and Mrs. Parker calmly said she had four cutting copies ready. He screened them and loved them. Before Christmas the films were finished (***Vitamins A, B, C, D***).*[10]

Grierson was a chauvinist-imperialist-genius, a pragmatic idealist who used women because the men were off to war, who used French Canadians because it was politically advisable to do so, but who firmly maintained the dominance of the British marketing empire in his filmic domain. "I look on cinema as a pulpit, and use it as a propagandist," he wrote in 1933; there was no nonsense about objectivity under his regime.

The most pervasive effect of Grierson's presence in Canada has been the dominance of the documentary form in Canadian filmmaking. In his day there were no credits on NFB docu-

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mentaries — Grierson said they were team-made films, and that individual contributions were not ultimately important. In effect, of course, these films were all known as Grierson's films, and later people remembered Stuart Legg and Tom Daly as having had considerable input. Only recently have film scholars begun the complicated job of digging out production files to discover who did what. To the surprise of the women in Studio 'D', the 'women's studio' established at the NFB in 1974, it turned out that they were not the first to involve women in camera, lighting, and sound, as well as production and direction, nor even the first to have all-women crews. Evelyn Spice Cherry, Margaret Perry, Judith Crawley, Gudrun Parker, Jane Marsh and many other women played crucial roles in the production of 'classic' wartime documentaries, and were conveniently pushed aside and forgotten, like other women all over the country, once the war was over.

Jane Marsh Beveridge, born in Montreal in 1915, was a writer, director, and producer at the NFB from 1939-1944. She made **Women Are Warriors** (1942) for the Canada Carries On newsreel series — the film is an extraordinary document of women's participation in the war effort in England, the USSR, and Canada. Her original title for the film was **Work for Women** (changed by management), and her initial research resulted in a long document on the historical background and contemporary situation of women, including statistics and analyses from twenty-six countries. She began her research report (unpublished) with a list of quotations illustrating misogyny through the ages, remarking that:

> *A general consensus of opinion of women as expressed by men during the last six thousand years leads one to believe that although quite indispensable they are also dangerous because incomprehensible and unpredictable, and they should therefore be kept apart as much as possible, either by being*
> *1) Put up on a pedestal and hypnotized into thinking they are frail, incompetent and dependent or*
> *2) Subjugated for the expediency of*
> *1. lust*
> *2. cheap labour*
> *and that all of them have two duties which should occupy the whole of their lives, thoughts and ambitions, i.e.,*
> *1. to make men comfortable*
> *2. to bear children*
> *and that on no account should they be allowed to use their faculties for anything else as this would bring about disorder by upsetting the status quo.*

Jane Marsh left the NFB and Canada in 1944, following a disagreement with John Grierson about the Canada Carries On series, which she was then producing. She said that Grierson was extremely unhappy about having a woman in that position, and that years later when she met him in New York, he told her she had been right, but that he would never give in to a woman.

> *I resigned in April 1944, as Grierson had developed megalomania about the Canada Carries On potential.*

On women at the NFB in the Grierson years:

> *They were so grateful to be working in interesting jobs that they didn't realize they were slaves.*[11]

Jane Marsh was the only woman at the NFB to direct films specifically dealing with the armed services. Other women at the Board concentrated on the domestic front: Evelyn Spice Cherry with her husband Lawrence headed the Agricultural Unit; Gudrun Parker, after the films on vitamins, made one on wartime day care centres, **Before They Are Six**, and went on in 1945 to make her best-known film, **Listen to the Prairies**, a document of the Winnipeg Music Festival. Most of the films made by women in those early years of the Board fell under the mandate to 'interpret Canada to Canadians,' as did Jane Marsh's Quebec film, **Alexis Tremblay, habitant** (1943, photographed by Judith Crawley); Laura Boulton's ethnographic series which included **Eskimo Arts and Crafts** (n.d.), **Arctic Hunters** (1942), **Peoples of the Potlatch** (1943), **Habitant Arts and Crafts** (1943); and Margaret Perry's Maritimes films such as **Grand Manan** (1943); and **Cape Islander** (n.d.) None of these films have any explicit feminist content — most seem based on the assumption that sexism didn't exist in Canadian society. And most of the women who worked in wartime production look back on that period with nostalgia, as a golden period when dedication and ability were all that counted. Their accounts of why they left the Board vary; some got married and continued to work, for their husbands; others went on to other work in other fields; some like Evelyn Spice Cherry and Margaret Perry, left to work in their own regions (Cherry Productions is still active in Regina). And for the next twenty-odd years the role of women in documentary production at the NFB was to be minimal. With the exceptions of Gudrun Parker and Julia Murphy, who made films about children and popular psychology, women were restricted to work as negative cutters, secretaries, and in

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some cases as editors. The NFB's *mandate* to interpret Canada to Canadians had become just that.

Women *in* documentary films were now depicted as case histories illustrating psychological problems which were invariably explained by male doctors, or else as appendages (wife, mother, sister, daughter, secretary, nurse, assistant, etc.) An example worthy of feminist analysis is **Feelings of Hostility** (1948), described as 'a dramatization of the story of Clare, a young woman whose only satisfaction comes from competing successfully.' Clare is shown at the end of the film as a successful career woman whose life is empty because she can't love anyone.

Not until the sixties, when the political climate was changing (even in Canada), and Beryl Fox started making documentary exposés for the CBC, and Dodi Robb was running women's programs at CTV and then the CBC, and Patricia Watson was making humanist documentaries at the NFB, and then the Challenge for Change program got underway at the NFB, making room for the talents of Bonnie Klein and Dorothy Henaut and a few other women, did NFB films start to show women in more central and independent roles, with more complexity and interest. Finally, in the seventies, when Kathleen Shannon's Working Mothers series came out of the Challenge for Change program and led to the formation of Studio D in 1974, women began to criticize NFB films for their stereotyped images of women and men, and their implicit and explicit sexism. Now there is a special catalogue put out by NFB women of films by and about women, including some of the old oppressive fifties films as examples of stereotypes.

The history of women at the NFB from 1939-1979 demonstrates a strong and complex connection between the role of women in production and the images of women in films — a connection which is crucially affected by the consciousness of the women involved. So long as women play decisive roles in production the films produced will reflect that fact — women will tend to have decisive roles or at least important roles in the films, whether dramatic or documentary. But only when women in production arrive at a feminist analysis of their own position and what they are doing in production, will films reflect that view and offer to the audience *a way of looking at* the roles played by women and men which is critical, and not merely acquiescent.

To provide some basis for considering where we are now in terms of feminist potential, I'd like to sketch in a bit more of the ragged history of the fifties and sixties, and contemporary scatterings of English-speaking Canadian women filmmakers.

Ragged History and Contemporary Scatterings

Outside of the NFB there was very little documentary production by women after the war, with the above-mentioned exceptions of Margaret Perry in the Maritimes and Evelyn Cherry in Saskatchewan. Sally Macdonald, who recorded sound at the NFB during the war, directed industrial films at Crawley's in Ottawa after the war. There was no feature film industry in Canada — the government had cheerfully agreed not to have one, provided Hollywood mentioned Canada from time to time. (Even today, bandits in Hollywood films talk about escaping to Canada. This is supposed to help Canadian tourism.)

Experimental and animated films comprise an area where women have done considerable work, in Canada as well as in other countries. Again, it started here at the NFB, where Grierson set up a protected kingdom for another Scotsman, Norman McLaren, who became the guru of animated film in Canada. Everyone has heard of McLaren, or seen such famous films as **Blinkety Blink, Pas de Deux,** or **A Chairy Tale**, and most film students know that McLaren was the first to draw directly on film. But not so many know of Evelyn Lambart, who worked closely with McLaren from the start, and has made an impressive body of films herself, such as **Maps for Action, The Impossible Map** (n.d., wartime), **Fine Feathers** (1968), and **The Hoarder** (1969). Recently Margaret Wescott directed a portrait of the artist in her 'retirement,' **Eve Lambart** (1978).

Alma Duncan and Audrey (Babs) McLaren left their work in animation at the NFB in 1951 to form Dunclaren Productions, an independent company. They lived in rented rooms in Ottawa, working with primitive equipment and a stand they built themselves to make puppet animations: **Kumak the Sleepy Hunter, Hearts and Soles**, and **Friendly Interchange** (all made in the fifties). They found it impossible to survive as independents, and Dunclaren Productions has been inactive since the late fifties although both women have continued to do other creative work.

There are now a number of women doing exceptional work in animation, most of them based around the NFB animation studio in Montreal, like Veronika Soul, a freelancer who does some work for the NFB and makes 'garbage' collages (**How the Hell are You?** 1972; **Tales of the Vienna Woods: A Freudian Romp**, 1974). She and Caroline Leaf, whose films include **The Street** (1976) and **The Owl Who Married a Goose** (1974), recently made a film about each other called **Interview** (1979), a wonderful film combining drawings, collage, and live-action (Caroline in her studio visited by her characters), with voice-over comments by the two women:

> **C:** *People like my films and that makes me like myself better than I used to. But people only see my films, they don't see me.*
>
> **V:** *You're very hard to see. You're in a cloud, like a foreign person. You're like a cloud in skirts, and I am a cloud in pants.*
>
> **C:** *I love what my hands are doing. I would never sacrifice my own life now for anybody.*

In Halifax Ramona MacDonald has her own animation studio, called Doomsday, where she works with Elaine Mackie (**Sand Switch**, 1978). In Vancouver Bettina Matzkuhn has made an extraordinary animated film for the Pacific Regional Office of the NFB, a celebration of the process of embroidering a picture of a young woman leaving her hometown (**Hometown**, 1979). In Toronto Patricia Gruben used animation to solve narrative problems in her experimental film **The Central Character** (1978), a film about groceries, kitchen floors, and entropy, using a printed text as well as diagrams, stock footage, and step-printing of live action. By the end of the film the woman is central to the cosmos.

Undaunted by the scale of the project, Lois Siegel tackles her first feature, **A 20th Century Chocolate Cake** with The Great Antonio. Photo: Daniel Villeneuve

Gruben is now completing a second experimental film, two years in the making, called **Sifted Evidence**, which uses front projection and studio actors to examine the memory of a woman who journeyed to Mexico and returned home, different, perhaps. In Montreal, Lois Siegel, who has been making experimental films for nearly ten years and, more recently, documentaries, is nearing completion of a self-sponsored "budgetless feature" called **A 20th-Century Chocolate Cake**, which combines dramatic and documentary techniques to comment on the absurdity of twentieth-century Montreal life.

Other women now working experimentally in film in Canada include Kim Ondaatje in London, Ontario; Kay Armatage, Nancy Nicol, and Kalli Paakspuu in Toronto; Lynn Smith and Joyce Borenstein in Montreal; Ellie Epp in Alberta; and Sandy Wilson in Vancouver, whose film **Growing Up at Paradise** (1977) uses home movie footage shot by her father and voice-over comments by both parents to reinvigorate the 'personal' film form.

By far the best-known woman who has made experimental films in Canada is Joyce Wieland. Like Nell Shipman, like many other talented Canadians, Joyce Wieland went to the U.S. to develop her work, growing along with the new American cinema movement in New York City. Like Nell Shipman she retained a deep love for Canada, particularly for the Canadian landscape, but Wieland's love for Canada coincided with a new flowering of Canadian nationalism in the late 1960's. While still in New York, working on ways of expressing her Canadian woman's identity, she prepared an art show called 'True Patriot Love,' shown in Ottawa in 1971. One of the exhibits was the 'Water Quilt,' with embroidered veils of Arctic flowers which lift to reveal sewn-in pages of *The Energy Poker Game* by Jim Laxer, about the American rape of the Arctic. In 1968 she made a film called **Rat Life and Diet in North America**, using gerbils on her kitchen table to construct a parable of the great American exodus to Canada in the days of draft resistance and radical American contempt for Canadian political awareness.

Using crafts traditionally labelled feminine, such as embroidery and quilting, applying these crafts in her filmmaking, as in **Hand Tinting** (1967-68), where she dyed the film with cloth dyes and punctured it with sewing needles, making films using household objects as in **Water Sark** (1964-65) — "a film about myself making a film about myself — or hand-holding a camera, shooting through train windows and car windows on a trip across Canada as she did in **Reason Over Passion** (1967-69), Wieland has shown that domestic attitudes can produce serious results, that the artist's personal perspective provides a valid and disturbing angle of vision of world affairs.

In writing the script for **The Far Shore** (1975), her only theatrically-distributed feature film, Joyce Wieland was in-

fluenced by the writing of the same James Oliver Curwood that Nell Shipman encountered over the script of **Back to God's Country**. The two films are linked by a bond deeper than Curwood's influence — the deep love of the Canadian landscape and its animals, the sense of melodrama in which the heroine plays a strong and resourceful role, the connection, only recently explored by feminist theorists, between women and nature in a positive sense, an affirmative sense.[12] This bond is more than historical coincidence. It has long been a dream of mine to raise funds for a new, tinted print of **Back to God's Country**, struck from the master at the National Film Archive, with a musical soundtrack composed and performed by Canadian women, to be shown across the country on a double bill with **The Far Shore**. I think both films would be seen in an entirely new light, and could be used to publicize women's participation in environmental movements. In an interview in 1975, Joyce Wieland spoke about her work.

> *I was conscious for quite a while about wanting to develop feminine art. I deliberately took feminine themes, because I knew that men wouldn't be interested in them... I clung to my cats as subjects, my rats, my dishes and pots, the view out my window. Our dining table and who came to visit us.*

On **The Far Shore**:

> *I did my best to embrace the form of the feature film in this work, without compromising myself. What I had developed in my past films was stillness, the use of grain, love of light, and personal subject matter. I brought my knowledge of film and joined it to traditional form... I worked for two and a half years preparing story boards, designing camera movement, making notes on lighting. I have over 2000 drawings of which 600 became the working boards, which I used to discuss the camera, lighting, production design of the film. It saved money and made a good film. It's against the dominant tendency in film at this moment in time, yes. Because it's just about people's feelings, it's about art and music...*
>
> *The vision of women, which may lack violence and big guns, could lead us to a new place. It would be nice to be allowed to see non-manipulative films in public in big theatres. Films about being, seeing, smelling, dreaming...*
>
> **Reason Over Passion** *is a landscape film of Canada, embracing the land in pictures.* **The Far Shore** *is the same landscape, only peopled.*[13]

Bonnie Kreps came to Canada from the U.S. in the early days of the American women's movement, and made her first film, **After The Vote**, in 1969 for W5 in Toronto. At that time the film represented the avant-garde of the new Canadian women's movement, strongly influenced by the Americans, putting suffragette history and American feminist theory (an

Attending to the minute details of "embroidering" her animation film, Bettina Matzkuhn works on **Hometown.**

interview with Ti-Grace Atkinson, footage of a Miss America pageant) into the context of Canadian statistics: 'One-third of the labour force in Canada is women, and most of them work to supplement the family income.' Kreps has publicly regretted her use of a male sociologist to explain sex-role stereotyping (with intercut shots of the director looking peculiar). I remember seeing **After the Vote** in the mid-seventies and finding it simplistic and crude. Now it seems an astonishingly lucid document for its time, the first wedge in the closed door on women's issues in Canadian documentaries since the war.

Bonnie Kreps sees her films as developing through three stages, which parallel the development of radical feminism: (1) anger: what's wrong and how to respond (**After the Vote**); (2) affirmation and celebration (**Portrait of My Mother**), 1973, **Mountain Dance**, 1976); and (3) women's vision, developing a feminist aesthetic (**This Film is About Rape**, 1978, and **No Life for a Woman: Women in Single-Industry Towns**, 1979). (From **Mountain Dance** on, all of Krep's films have been made in British Columbia.) In the last two films the emphasis is on letting women speak for themselves, using the craft of film to allow them to speak as clearly as possible with a minimum of distortion and interference. This can only be achieved when the filmmaker is working in close cooperation with her subjects, and when she is conscious of the implications of the subject matter. Both films work very well with a wide range of women, and the key seems to be that they offer a set of possible responses to a clearly-defined situation of women's oppression, always given of women who are articulate and ordinary: a grandmother who was nearly raped recently, but who cries only when talking about how her daughter was raped twenty years ago; a stewardess who remarks that the popular image of her as a 'cupcake' ignores her function — she must be able to evacuate a plane speedily and calmly and she is tested on this ability every year; a woman working in a women's centre up north who describes what it was like to live on welfare in a crowded trailer camp; other women describing their lives in single-industry towns, clearly and with full consciousness.

Both **This Film Is about Rape** and **It's No Life for a Woman** are very sophisticated from a feminist perspective, and both appear deceptively simple as films. In each case the film moves from a composite picture of women's oppression and alienation, through individual expressions of awareness, to analysis of the situation and how it can be changed by collective action on the part of conscious individuals — without the assumption that the system is either innocent or irresistible.[14] Bonnie Kreps, who lives in Vancouver, is presently working with Studio D of the NFB on her next film, about physics, psychics, and radical feminism (!!).

Vancouver's Women in Focus Society is a small group of women who produce and distribute slide-tape presentations, videotapes, leaflets, and films about women's issues. In the fall of 1978 Women in Focus organized a Feminist Film and Video Festival, which was a major event bringing together recent women's productions for a west coast audience and offering a forum for discussion of feminist issues. (That same fall there was another festival of Canadian women's films sponsored by the Powerhouse Gallery in Montreal.)

The offices of Women in Focus now house Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVAW), and the joint organization has a separate brochure listing materials available on that subject. They are currently producing, with the help of NFB's Studio D, a 20-minute film in 16mm on sexual harassment of women in the work force.

A Shuswap Indian woman in the Cariboo Country of B.C. is the focus of Anne Wheeler's **Augusta**. Photo: NFB

Moira (Mo) Simpson is a Vancouver filmmaker who works as a video producer and film teacher at Capilano College. Her first solo film, **Emigrante** (1979), was sponsored by the B.C. Multicultural Department, and it's about racism in Canada — a lively musical collage of racist attitudes expressed as voices over sympathetic images of the people against whom prejudice is directed, a powerful example of how non-verbal expression can be used progressively to combat clichés.

Mo Simpson got involved with community video in B.C. in 1972. Eventually, through Women and Film, the national network set up by the Toronto Women and Film Festival in 1973, she started Isis, a women's distribution company for video and film, which eventually employed thirteen women and operated until 1976. She made two films with Isis: **Can You Hear Me?** (1974), selected for the NFB Studio D just-a-Minute reel; and **Dinette Suite** (1974).

Simpson is now working on **Soup du jour**, a 15-minute experimental/political/personal film based on her own experiences, ideas, and emotions while in Amsterdam. The film is evolving as a collective project strongly supported by the women working with her, and it reflects that collective spirit in its structure. One woman's voice accompanies images of different women in different situations — the effect is provocative and illuminating — a single woman's journey becomes a quest. So far Simpson has paid for **Soup du jour** (now near fine cut) with her own savings, recently supplemented by a grant from the Women's Bureau, Secretary of State.

Elise Swerhone is a Winnipeg filmmaker, who has been earning her living and gaining experience as a camera assistant on feature films in Toronto and NFB films in Winnipeg. She shot and directed her first independent film, **Havakeen Lunch** (funded by Canada Council), in Winnipeg in 1978, then directed and shot a 10-minute documentary for the NFB about a Saulteaux Indian woman who collects maple syrup from Manitoba maples (**Nanoonse**, 1979).

Elise Swerhone's work is careful and quiet — she tends to allow people time to express themselves both visually and verbally. She is now working as camera assistant on a film directed by Norma Bailey for the NFB, a documentary about a romance between two street people in Winnipeg. Her next film, funded by the Canada Council, will be a filmed history of a Ukrainian family, probably her cousins.

Nose and Tina, the half-hour drama Norma Bailey is directing in Winnipeg, is being produced by the Prairies Regional Office of the NFB. Originally from Winnipeg, Norma Bailey lives and works in Montreal, travelling to Winnipeg to shoot her film. Last year Gail Singer, a Toronto-based filmmaker, made a documentary on battered wives, **Loved, Honoured and Bruised**, for the same Prairies NFB Office. She is now working on **Paraskeva Clark**, a portrait of an eighty-one-year-old artist who lives in Toronto — this time the film is being produced by Studio D of the NFB in Montreal.

Anne Wheeler (Mughda) is a producer/director with the NFB in Edmonton. Mughda started with Filmwest when that company formed itself in 1970, and like the rest of the group she learned by making films. She applied for an OFY grant to make a film about the status of women, which became a collective project, **One Woman**, a short dramatic film focussing on a woman who leaves her marriage. Subsequently Mughda and Lorna Rasmussen, who had worked on **One Woman**, made **Great Grand Mother** (1975), a history of prairie pioneer women, and **Happily Unmarried** (1976), about an older single woman. Mughda then joined the NFB staff, and has since worked on a number of films; she directed **Augusta** (1976), a portrait of a Shuswap Indian woman in the Cariboo country of B.C. **Augusta** shares with some other Western women's films (**Havakeen Lunch, Portrait of My Mother**), a slow pace, a loose structure, and careful attention to the unobtrusive personality of the main figure. More recently, Mughda collaborated with Edmonton writer Myrna Kostash on **Teach Me To Dance**, a short dramatic film about two Prairie girls, one English in background, the other Ukrainian.

Mughda also produced **Priory: The Only Home I've Got** (1978), an award-winning cinéma-vérité document about one of the 'best' extended-care hospitals in Canada. I find the carefully neutral presentation of this problematic institution puzzling and disturbing in its 'objective' anonymity, especially in the light of Mughda's earlier portraits of independent, indomitable old women.

> *...the last interview we did (for* **Great Grand Mother***) was with a very articulate lady, the kind of community outcast you find in a lot of small communities because she was so outspoken and really independent in her old age. She didn't want to stay where she was, she wanted to keep her old stove, she wanted to pump the water and feed her chickens, and wanted everybody to stay away.*
>
> *I had told her that two people were coming the next day, and said to her, 'One of them is a man,' because we'd talked about very intimate women's subjects.*
>
> *Rico came in. I introduced her to him and Lorna and about five minutes later she said, 'What do you take in your coffee, Susan?' Lorna turned to look at me and smiled like 'She's forgotten my name,' and said 'Well, I won't have any coffee, thank you.' But the lady said, 'I didn't mean her, I meant her!' pointing to Rico, you see, and Rico kind of looked up and she said, 'Well, if she's come to talk to me about women's subjects, she'd better learn to be a lady!' And you know, he just answered to Susan all afternoon.*[15]

Mugda is now working on a film based on her father's diaries as a prisoner of war in Japan.

Other women making films out West include Shelagh Reljic, a veteran editor and producer working in Vancouver, mainly on contract to the NFB. She produced **She's a Railroader** (Barbara Tranter, 1979) and **Pretend You're Wearing a Barrel** (Jan-Marie Martell, 1979), films designed as apprenticeship projects for the young women directors. She is now producing another first film by Sharon McGowan about an immigrant woman, **Rosanna Santa Maria**. Shelagh believes that craft is the key word, and that more women should be trained in film craft.

Justine Dancy is a Vancouver editor/producer who works with her husband, Jim Bizzzocchi. They've made a number of films for and about native people, including **Dene Nation** (1978)

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and a series shot in Super-8 and blown up to 16mm for the B.C. Union of Indian Chiefs. They're now in pre-production of a film about pre-natal care, for which funds are being raised by their family doctor. They see their work as representing the views and needs of their (independent) sponsoring groups, and so belong to a tradition of committed documentarians.

On Canada's other coast, Lulu Keating, at the Atlantic Filmmakers' Coop in Halifax, recently organized a tour across the country of work from Halifax and from the Newfoundland Filmmakers' Coop, in conjunction with the Canadian Film Institute. Keating's first film, **Lulu's Back in Town**, is now complete and she is working on her second film, **Jabberwocky.**

Other women involved in production at the Atlantic coop include Julie Hutchings and Jean Burgess, who are making a short narrative film with an all-woman cast and crew, and Ramona MacDonald, who made **Reagan's Cove** (1975), and **Spirits of an Amber Past** (1978).

In Hampton, New Brunswick, Marilyn Fox is making her first film, a drama about young children on an island, funded by an NFB/Canada Council training program for regional development.

In Montreal an independent group of filmmakers — Joyce Rock, Sophie Bissonnette, and Martin Duckworth — have completed a feature-length documentary made in close collaboration with Wives Support the Strike. The film is about the role of women in the strike against Inco in Sudbury by the United Mine Workers. **A Wives' Tale**, released in Quebec in French in October, 1980, and in Toronto in its English version in November, is the most ambitious independent women's project yet undertaken in Canada, as well as the most ambitious labour film. The story of the filmmakers' struggles for funding is at once inspiring and discouraging, indicating great determination on the part of the filmmakers and serious problems of production and distribution for independents in this country.

Margot Trevelyan in Toronto has made films on union issues for CUPE; Peggy Nash and Jacqueline Levitin worked with other Film League members to make **Up From The Bargain Basement** (1979), a musical docu-comedy about management/labour relations and the T. Eaton Co.; Colleen Bostwick in Vancouver produced and wrote **For 20¢ A Day** (1979), a radical history of the Depression years in B.C.

Other women working independently in film now include Nesya Shapiro (**Passages**, lyric drama, 1978); Holly Dale and Janis Cole (**Cream Soda**, on strippers, 1976, **Thin Line**, on male prisoners, 1978); Marilyn Belec (**Taking Chances**, a dramatized documentary about teenage sexuality, 1979); and Dianne Corbin (**Soul Survivor**, documentary on rock singer Dianne Hetherington, 1980), all working in Toronto.

As for women in feature film production, a recent issue of *CineMag* (November, 1980) lists 30 features in production and 109 in negotiation. Out of all these listings there are seven women included as producers or executive producers; none (0) listed as full directors on feature-length dramatic films (but see below); six screenwriters, and one director of photography. These figures which are typical, not unusual, don't include **Love**, a feature-length "anthology" produced by Renee Perlmutter, which is being directed and was written in segments by an assortment of international women, including Mai Zetterling, Nancy Dowd, Germaine Greer, and Joni Mitchell. Of the four directors, one, Annette Cohen, is Canadian. Also listed in production is a National Film Board documentary, **Nuns**, coming out of Studio D, directed by Margaret Wescott, with camera by Susan Trow and sound by Ingrid Cusiel. Among the features, the one with most interest for women is **Latitudes 55**, written by Sharon Riis (author of *The True Story of Ida Johnson*), with script consultation by Anne Cameron. Cameron recently collaborated with Ralph Thomas on a feature script about cults, which was produced by Vivienne Leebosh (**Women in Cuba, ArtsCuba**). Other scripts by Anne Cameron include **Dreamspeaker** (1978), **A Matter of Choice** (1978), and **Drying Up the Streets** (1979).

> *I'm a wordslinger. I use images, whether word-images or visual images, to make people respond, look at, see, and feel. The line that has been welcomed most in* **A Matter of Choice** *is the line 'He was inside me. I live inside me,' and I feel really good when women tell me that line says it for them, says how they feel about being invaded; when men tell me, as many of them have, that that one particular line made them feel they had begun to relate to the pain the woman feels, I feel like I did my job.*[16]

Fumbling for a Feminist Perspective

Looking at the (erratic) situation of women filmmakers in Canada the following observations seem pertinent.

(1) Most, by far, of the women now directing or producing films in Canada are working, on staff or as freelancers, for the NFB or the CBC.

(2) Very few women involved in decision-making levels of production are making feminist films, by which I mean films specifically concerned with defining, questioning, or challenging our patriarchal society.

(3) Women in English-speaking Canada have very little creative input into feature film production. I should make it clear here that the reason I haven't listed any women directing feature films or feature-length television programs in this country is that there aren't any. No woman in English-speaking Canada has ever directed a second theatrically-released feature film in this country. (The three who've directed one each are: Sylvia Spring, **Madeleine Is**, 1970; Joyce Wieland, **The Far Shore**, 1976; and Janine Manatis, **I Maureen**, 1978.)

(4) So far, the feature 'boom' in Canada has shown small likelihood of producing films of any positive interest to women. The most positive effect of the boom has been that a few women have been hired as assistants or apprentices to sound and camera, and that women are getting work in props, various production jobs, and editing.

(5) Documentaries remain the most important field for women in Canada, in terms of accessibility and influence. Feminist input into documentary production is significant but not large.

There is an important distinction between the concept of equal opportunity for women in the film industry and the concept of a conscious feminist approach to filmmaking. So far I have been surveying the history and contemporary situation of Canadian women in filmmaking from a largely

uncritical perspective. The one area I have not discussed is one place in Canada where women are working full-time, in close contact with other women, on the production of films dealing with issues important to women — that is, Studio D of the NFB. I would like to bring a more critical feminist perspective to bear on Studio D, because it plays such an important role in Canada in the production and distribution of films concerned with the position of women.

Two conflicting images come to mind when I think of Studio D: in its embattled position at the NFB it has produced a handful of films of great interest to women across the country, and so resembles a living branch growing green from a dead tree. At the same time, in its high-handed and exploitative treatment of independent women, Studio D, like its large and lumpish NFB father, sits toadlike in the way of a genuinely alternative production/distribution network for feminists.

Certainly films such as **Patricia's Moving Picture** (Bonnie Klein, 1979), **The Lady from Gray County** (Janice Brown and Margaret Wescott, 1977, a historical portrait of Agnes MacPhail), and **An Unremarkable Birth** (Diane Beaudry, 1979) are important feminist films on women's subjects which would have been difficult if not impossible to produce outside the NFB. Certainly also a number of independent feminist films on more controversial topics, such as **This Film Is About Rape, A Wives' Tale**, and **Good Day Care: One out of Ten**, have been produced outside of Studio D and the NFB on low budgets and with small return to the filmmakers. Regional studios, sometimes in cooperation with Studio D, have funded a few important women's films, such as **Post-Partum Depression** (Margrit Nance, Vancouver, 1978), **Loved, Honoured and Bruised** (Gail Singer, Winnipeg, 1979), and **Great Grand Mother**, which vary somewhat from the Montreal NFB stamp.

Of these latter, the most contentious has been Bonnie Kreps's **It's No Life for a Woman: Women in Single-Industry Towns**, produced for the Pacific Regional Studio, 1979. **It's No Life for a Woman** differs markedly from Studio D films in offering a feminist analysis of a powerful sector of the Canadian economy, and in showing how that sector oppresses women and what women have begun to do about it. Studio D films, like most Montreal-based NFB films apart from the now-defunct Challenge for Change program, have little to offer in the way of controversial analysis and tend instead to concentrate on stories of extraordinary individual women who have, either alone or with the help of friends, found success, peace of mind, fulfilment, or achievement through their work. (The Working Mothers series, which doesn't follow this pattern, was initiated within Challenge for Change and produced by that studio. The series focuses on 'ordinary' women and is based on an overall impression of women's situation without pointing any specific fingers.)

It is a peculiar fact that the only Studio D film to offer explicit analysis is probably its least satisfactory and least used film (also one of its most expensive!), a reportage called **Some American Feminists** (Nicole Brossard, Luce Guilbeault, Margaret Wescott, 1977), consisting of interviews with American feminists by two Québécois women. The interviews tend to remain at an abstract theoretical level, ungrounded in any concrete reference to women's lives or specific situations, **Patricia's Moving Picture**, on the other hand, which offers no explicit analysis but is instead grounded in Bonnie Klein's long experience with the organizing process — and *shows* a

For this rape victim (Roberta Maxwell, left) a good offense is the only defense: with her, Neil Dainard and Fiona Reid in **A Matter of Choice**, written by Anne Cameron. Photo: CBC Photo Service

woman changing her life with the help of a Women's Centre — does exactly what Studio D is best equipped to do. I would like to spend more time here in discussing this film and this director as examples of the roots and potential of Studio D at its best.

Bonnie Klein's work in film, like Studio D itself, began in the Challenge for Change program in the late sixties. She made films about social change in Canada, films focussing on issues such as race relations, housing, and native education, using the work of the American radical educator Saul Alinsky to focus awareness of community organizing as an ongoing process. In 1969 Bonnie Klein and Dorothy Henaut directed, with George Stoney producing, a film called **VTR St. Jacques**, which documents the use of video to raise consciousness and pull people together in a working-class community in Montreal. The film remains a crucial document for the study of how media can be used *by* people instead of it using them.

In 1970 Bonnie Klein made **Citizen's Medicine**, about the St. Jacques community health clinic in Montreal, a film in which the clinic committee participated at every stage, from planning through production and editing. **Citizen's Medicine** was also produced by George Stoney, who made **You Are on Indian Land**, and, the story goes, shook up the NFB to the point where he had to leave. Kathleen Shannon, now executive producer of Studio D, was sound editor on **You Are on Indian Land**, and was taught by Stoney — his influence is clear in the Working Mothers series and in the grassroots inclination of Studio D films. But Stoney was anathema to the NFB bureaucracy. There was something very disturbing about giving the responsibility for a film's point of view over to a partisan group. It's so much more comfortable to retain control and to hold up an individual as a model — looking at her, rather than having her, presented by her peers, looking back at us.

The tension between Bonnie Klein's background with Stoney and the quiet pressure of the NFB today is present in **Patricia's Moving Picture** (1979), her most recent film. **Patricia** combines Klein's consistent interest in the process of social change with a feminist perspective on the politics of personal relationships. Patricia is indeed moving — with the help of her local women's centre in B.C., she is emerging from a difficult transition period between fulltime wife and motherhood to a new and more independent existence. As she discusses her changing self with other women and with her husband she becomes an articulate and sympathetic focus for women in the audience.

There is one scene where a woman from the Women's Centre describes the first time Patricia came in, so nervous and suspicious she wouldn't even sit down, saying 'I don't know about this women's centre.' Patricia joins in the laughter and the description, adding that she was being pushed by one and pulled by another, and then talks about how much more confident she is now, with a job, her own car in her own name, her own bank account. In a discussion with her husband, Patricia is able to call him on emotional blackmail without cutting off communication. Her problems are seen subjectively, with a view to how she can change; her strength is demonstrated by her own presence and actions.

Patricia's Moving Picture is an important film, especially because many women in Patricia Garner's position feel threatened by the women's movement, erroneously convinced by the mass media that feminists don't value or respect women who work at home and raise children. My criticism of the film is that there is such a single-track focus on Patricia, with the film ending on a shot of her with her children, very reassuring, not at all challenging. The potential was clearly there for opening out to a sense of how many others there are like Patricia, and how the collective support of many other women has helped her to come through as she has. There is evidence of that collective support in the film, but by staying so tightly with Patricia, the structure of the film works against the sense of collectivity.

Bonnie Klein's newest project, produced by Dorothy Henaut, is a film about pornography, a subject which offers considerable scope for the kind of participatory documentary pioneered by Stoney and Klein in the old days. Combined with a thoughtful feminism it could be very strong indeed.

Patricia's Moving Picture, released last year, is already in widespread use; in January 1980 it was booked 206 times, and twelve prints were sold. The NFB estimates an audience of 100 per booking, which means that perhaps 20,600 people in Canada saw the film in one month, not including screenings of the prints sold. This is a good record, though not extraordinary for Studio D films — they tend to be heavily booked, which indicates that Studio D responds to a real need across the country. In terms of what this means to feminist filmmakers outside of the NFB, well, for one thing, no independent would dream of attempting to make an alternative film on the same subject as almost any Studio D film — there would be no market, no way of funding it. Whatever we think of **Patricia**, that is the film that will be used. Fortunately, it's a good film. In this respect independent feminist filmmakers are faced with precisely the same dilemma as any other independents in Canada. The NFB represents a (benevolent) monopoly, and as *The Film Industry in Canada* suggests, the private sector in Canada is not at all interested in benevolence, seeking only a fair chance to make its own way:

> *...the government, while not constrained by the profit requirements which govern the private sector, intervenes drastically in the normal market mechanism by being a price setter through its function as the major purchaser of private sector output.*
>
> *...the government has treated the private sector in a traditionally paternalistic and benevolent manner, willingly assuming a role in the survival of the industry. The private sector, however, decries this attitude and only seeks a fair and equal competitive chance to gain access to markets which they claim are currently unjustifiably reserved for public agencies involved in film productions.*[17]

To carry the documentation of the government report a bit further, let's look again at the claim that the Canadian market is fragmented and small. As an independent producer I am painfully aware that, unlike my counterparts in the U.S., I have no hope of making enough of a return on an alternative film (i.e., not an industrial or government sponsored film) to support myself, let alone to plow back proceeds into another production. Like others in my situation, I have accepted the argument that this is due to the much smaller population of Canada, spread over so much more territory. That is an objective fact, not to be denied. However, the NFB itself estimates that over 49 million Canadian viewers attend screenings of NFB films every year — more than half the audience for commercial feature films. Taking television broadcasts into account, the NFB estimate of its viewing audience rises to 267 million in Canada plus 707 million outside Canada, for a total of 974 million in 1978. These figures suggest that the difficulties faced by independent producers and distributors in Canada are not simply a matter of lack of initiative.

A further problem, not explored by the government report, is the huge difference in budget and technical resources available to NFB filmmakers versus independents. There is an insistence which often amounts to obsession, on the part of NFB producers, on a degree of technical gloss which rarely implies anything at all about the intelligence or creative impact of the film, but which, considering the omnipresence of the NFB product, has had the effect of conditioning Canadian audiences to expect gloss. Independent producers therefore feel constrained to aim for comparable technical levels, so that they can make essential sales to television and so that Canadian audiences will accept their films as 'professional.' This has resulted in the formulaic quality of many Canadian documentaries, all shot in beautiful 7247 color negative with lots of sync sound, lit to make every interior look cozy and bright, shot and edited to remove every trace of the filmmakers' presence. If it has been decided to show the filmmakers at work, a beautifully-lit scene of an all-woman crew may be included in the film, which is still shot and edited to remove every other trace of the filmmakers, such as a subjective camera which wobbles or changes focus, or editing which makes a clear statement by being obvious, or a scene which is long enough, in which the camera is still enough, that it becomes perfectly obvious that the subject is responding to the presence of a crew. Instead of using technology to achieve greater accuracy and clarity of presentation, technology becomes an end in itself — at worst, gloss which covers a lack of vision and hampers the development of badly-needed, always under-funded alternative viewpoints.

There is very little experimentation with form and technique in Canadian documentaries. The corollary of this is that Canadian experimental film, including animation, is virtually all form and technique with very little interest in subject matter, especially subject matter which could be called political. There are a few exceptions — among women Joyce Wieland is one, Mo Simpson is another. Patricia Gruben's **The Central Character** is a rare example of a Canadian film which combines feminist subject matter and experimental technique.

One of the ironies inherent in our colonized and institutionalized film system is that, while our incentive to experiment is limited by the way our market has been carved up, we're also not getting to see the exciting work being done by women in the U.S. and other countries which might inspire us to experiment, regardless of markets. The American products which flood our markets don't usually include alternative films, and our few Canadian alternative distributors are (understandably) reluctant to take on many American films. Neither do we have access to European women's films — when they do appear they are shown as part of national retrospectives, usually once only — most Canadians are unaware of any European women filmmakers except for Lina Wertmuller.

The difficulty of seeing independent films from Quebec is even more disturbing — it is a double problem of availability and French versioning. Brigitte Sauriol's feature **L'Absence** (1976) has never been released here, nor has Mireille Dansereau's first feature **La vie rêvée** (1972), although it is available in a 16mm subtitled version. A recent link between DEC Films in Toronto and Cinema Libre in Montreal will hopefully improve this situation.

The films made by Canadian women within and outside institutions show that we have considerable strength and clarity of vision. Courage to break our own rules will come only when we have confidence in our audience, and, so far, there has been no audience to support us. The other side of the call to Canadian women filmmakers to explore new ways of communicating with other women is a call to the audience of Canadian women to support exploration by becoming an eager, paying audience. The next time you see a crowded movie line-up, think about all those people paying $4.00 each to see women exploited, idealized, ignored, destroyed. Curious, isn't it? Time for a change, I'd say. ■

Footnotes

[1] Of the book-length studies of women in feature film which came out during the seventies, the most useful is Molly Haskell's *From Reverence to Rape* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1973). There are now two anthologies of feminist criticism: Karyn Kay and Gerald Peary, eds., *Women and the Cinema* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1977) and Patricia Erens, *Sexual Stratagems: The World of Women in Film* (New York: Horizon, 1976).

Beyond the bibliographies in these two anthologies it is advisable to consult the indexes for *Jump Cut, Screen, Screen Education, Film Quarterly*, and *Cinéaste*, as well as all issues of the now defunct *Women & Film*. *New German Critique* ran a special feminist issue (no. 13, Winter 1978), which included a collective piece: 'Women and Film: A Discussion of Feminist Aesthetics.' The feminist magazine *Heresies* and *Chrysalis* have carried some important pieces — in particular, on Canadian women's film; Ardele Lister, 'Hewing the Wood and Drawing the Water: Women and Film in Colonized Canada,' *Heresies*, no. 2 (May 1977), pp. 103-105.

Also see Seth Feldman and Joyce Nelson, eds., *Canadian Film Reader* (Toronto: Peter Martin Associates, 1977); Eleanor Beattie, *The Handbook of Canadian Film*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Peter Martin Associates, 1977); Barbara Halpern Martineau, 'Women in Film,' *Communiqué* (May, 1975), pp. 32-35; and the index for *Cinema Canada*.

[2] Statistics about film are from Statistics Canada: statistics about TV are from the Bureau of Broadcast Measurement. In every case the most recent statistics available have been quoted.

[3] *The Film Industry in Canada*, prepared by the Bureau of Management Consulting for the Department of the Secretary of State, 1977.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] Statement on Certification of the International, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Character of Canadian-owned Audio-visual Materials in Accordance with the Agreement for Facilitating the International Circulation of Visual and Auditory Materials of an Educational, Scientific and Cultural Character (UNESCO: Beirut, Lebanon, 1948), National Film Board addendum, February 1969.

[8] *The Film Industry in Canada.*

[9] For a fuller account of her career, se Judith Smith, 'Girl Wonder from God's Country: Nell Shipman,' *Cinema Canada*, no. 51 (Nov./Dec. 1978), pp. 35-38.

[10] Marjorie McKay, *History of the National Film Board of Canada* (unpublished ms.).

[11] Conversation with Barbara Halpern Martineau, in May, 1975. For a fuller account of women's participation in NFB wartime production see Barbara Halpern Martineau, 'Before the Guerrilieres: Women's Films at the NFB during World War II,' *Canadian Film Reader.*

[12] See Susan Griffin, *Woman and Nature: the Roaring Inside Her* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978). Also see Barbara Halpern Martineau, '*The Far Shore*: A Peaceful Film about Violence,' *Cinema Canada* no. 27 (April 1976), pp. 20-24.

[13] Joyce Wieland, interview with Barbara Halpern Martineau, August 1975.

[14] *This Film is about Rape* was co-sponsored by the B.C. Rape Crisis Centres and the B.C. Police Commission, and is available free of charge from rape crisis centres across Canada. It is accompanied by 'The Rape Prevention Resource Manual' which provides information to complement the basic message of the film: that rape is a crime of violence that has little or nothing to do with provocation by the victim; that every woman is a possible victim; that while some women can better prepare themselves to deal with aggression, not all women can or should be expected to repel unprovoked violence.

No Life for a Woman was produced independently by Bonnie Kreps for the NFB Pacific Region and is distributed by the NFB.

[15] Anne Wheeler, interview with Barbara Halpern Martineau, December 1974, published in *Interlock*, nos. 2 & 3 (April/May 1975), pp. 21-30.

[16] Anne Cameron, letter to Barbara Halpern Martineau, March 1980.

[17] *The Film Industry in Canada.*

Keeping Good Company

by Lois Siegel

From a guy eating his shoes, to piglets sucking garlic milk, this year's Grierson Seminar proves again that variety *is* the spice of life.

The Grierson Seminar — a unique opportunity for film people to get together: here, Belgian director Boris Lehman with Grierson Committee President, Liz Avison. Photo: Lois Siegel

It is rare and unusual that filmmakers in any country find a way to meet each other en masse, view each other's work and maintain an open, critical perspective with an overall positive intent.

Canadian filmmakers have this opportunity.

The Sixth Grierson Film Seminar — programmed by Robert Daudelin, director of the Cinémathèque Québécoise in Montreal — took place November 11-16 at Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario. There, 80 filmmakers from across the country, several Americans and One Belgian cinéaste discussed, argued and criticized one another's films.

The participants were housed at the Prince of Wales Hotel — a rather plush setting in contrast to the image of the "hardnosed" documentary filmmaker, who seldom eats three meals a day. There was also a certain irony in screening **A Wive's Tale**, by Joyce Rock, Martin Duckworth and Sophie Bissonnette, about the wives of the steel workers who supported the strike in Sudbury, then sitting down to the hotel's full-course meal — knowing that those wives had lived on baloney sandwiches for months during the strike.. But one tried to be objective — from 9 a.m. often until 2 a.m. After each series of screenings, the film directors themselves were barraged with questions in an informal but lively atmosphere.

It soon became apparent that the more you put into the seminar, the more you got out of it.

Some films were applauded, others were attacked. Most often it was the films made in the traditional National Film Board style which were challenged because of their predictability: this is what happened, this is what it looks like, this is what you should think about it... But the seminar also featured a variety of *cinéma verité* styles, so, there was something for everyone.

Lois Siegel teaches film production at Concordia University and John Abbott College in Montreal. She has just completed ***Extreme Close-Up*** *— a documentary about multi-handicapped blind people, which was screened at this year's Grierson Seminar — and is presently finishing her first feature film,* ***A 20th-Century Chocolate Cake.***

Some serious shop talk for filmmakers Frank Cole (left), Al Razutis (center), and programmer of The Grierson this year, Robert Daudelin (right). Photo: Lois Siegel

Besides the usual, straightforward presentations which adequately covered their subjects, Daudelin selected some films that transcended the conservative shells in which most films or filmmakers tend to wrap themselves.

Boris Lehman, a Belgian filmmaker, presented **Magnum Begynasium Bruxellense,** (also recently presented at the 9th Festival International du Nouveau Cinéma in Montreal), a film both difficult and intriguing. Lehman often uses film as a therapeutic medium. He teaches the mentally-disturbed to work with Super 8, and they also assist him on his own film crews composed of non-professionals.

Béguinage is a diary of the inhabitants of a poor section of Brussels threatened by demolition and renovation. We view a day's activities as the camera moves through a series of vignettes to reveal the intricacies of what, at first glance, seem like ordinary, perhaps even dull lives, but which slowly unveil little fascinations. The pace of the film is slow — deliberate. Creeping dollies on city dwellings in black and white allow the viewer to closely examine what is presented. People pass in front of the camera as it studies them. Then, suddenly, the pace is broken by static inserts of walls in rich color, with the addition of guitar notes — dispersed and random. The film seems to be a painting in black and white, with only the details in color. Philippe Boesmans, the music composer, created what is known as "series" music for **Béguinage.** Lehman took the music and cut it into sequences to fit his images — sometimes notes are repeated or multiplied, depending on his needs.

Béguinage is a documentary which mixes real time with film time. In real time an individual will grind coffee without ellipses; we see all this, but then Lehman introduces film time. An old man assembles some sort of construction, piece-by-piece. We watch him fitting the parts together. Slowly we discover that he is completing a merry-go-round, complete with horses which move up and down. Suddenly the work comes alive with the addition of color. Small details are given life as shades, which at first seemed drab, assume the soft tones of blue or pink as the merry-go-round begins to turn. As the image changes to color, a strange, broken touch of music occurs simultaneously, altering the feeling of the scene, and forcing the viewer to reconsider what he has just thought to be true.

Director of **Mother Tongue**, Derek May.

Lehman's work often reminds one of Fredrick Wiseman's films because he doesn't use narration or any other didactic approach. Subtley, though, he does make comments about his society. For example, a committee of the unemployed gives figures during a press conference. At the end of the year, 80,000 new university graduates will hit the job market. This scene is followed by innocent children's drawings on a fence.

An elderly lady recites a poem: "We go too fast...We live on earth like marionettes." This scene is followed by a man who is being awkwardly fitted with a white, obviously fake, Santa Claus beard and hair. Another sequence presents an elderly man, saying, "Here's my home. I am a collector — a little of everything...I never have mice in the house. In every corner there's a postcard of a cat." His home is full of life-sized mannequins, dolls, records, and such: "I'd like to get married soon so that things would get dusted and arranged."

One senses that precise decisions have been made in **Béguinage**, that the filmmaker is not just running film stock through his camera, but is indeed *creating.*

Mother Tongue by Derek May (NFB) was refreshing because of its unpredictable montage. It was supposed to concern itself with the problem of languages, but was actually much more complex than that. In it, the filmmaker turns the camera on his own family to explore how a French Québécois actress, married to a filmmaker from England, lives together with their two young children. Often accused of being self-indulgent, May counters attacks by explaining, "I want to know myself before I make films about other people. I don't feel comfortable filming other people's lives."

In **Mother Tongue** the viewer witnesses the everyday activities in the May household. The mother cooks dinner, the childen play games imitating each other's sounds, the father watches the news in English, the mother leaves her cooking to switch the TV news station to a French-speaking broadcast. One day the son, Max May, comes home from his French school stating that he no longer likes his

name because it drastically differs from those of his friends. He wants to be called Jean Bédard. The son later tells his companions that he'd rather see his mother performing the role of the Bionic Woman than some of the more serious, dramatic roles she plays. As the parents question each other about their roots, and the family's daily routine goes on, there is both humour and sincerity. In the end, the film speaks for itself.

On the lighter side, Californian filmmaker Les Blank showed up with a series of films (T-shirts and posters) which promoted the filmmaker's love for cooking — and cooking's love for being filmed.

Werner Herzog Eats His Shoe had everyone in the aisles laughing. Herzog fills a pair of old shoes with garlic, tomatoes and other delights, then, as part of an agreement, cooks and eats them. What type of documentary is this? One isn't sure, but the process is entertaining. And a few perceptive comments do seep through. "Our civilization doesn't have adequate visual images," a voice-over states, as we see the usual, TV, commercial garbage projected in living colour — and life, as a result, seems all the more absurd.

Garlic is as Good as 10 Mothers soon followed, to the pleasure of viewers with a taste for garlic. The film celebrates the herb's many uses: feed it to mother pigs, then the little pigs will suck at them for a real treat. "Little pigs love garlic milk," the film exclaims; Californians of all shapes and sizes profess their love of the stuff; bowls full of it are crushed to the beat of lively Spanish music...Finally, one is sure that the film itself reeks of garlic.

Debbie, a first film by Bohdan Montasewich (a recent graduate of Ryerson), is a sensitive study of a young mentally-retarded girl who is beginning to lead her own life. She works in a restaurant and has her own apartment. Fortunately, Montasewich doesn't encumber the film with didactic narration. Instead, he lets Debbie speak for herself. She tells us what she can do within her limitations; how she does these things well and derives pleasure from them. Unlike many films about the handicapped, that lead one to pity, the "star" in this film repeatedly says, "I'd love to do that for you," in a way that no one doubts her sincerity.

Frank Cole is a rather unusual filmmaker because all his work focuses on death. **A Documentary,** from his series "Death Works," is a stark black and white film which features Cole's grandfather reliving his last moments with the dying grandmother — a physically wasted skeleton to whom he professes his love. Presented through live action and still photographs, this short film explores the feelings of the aged. "I like young people, but younger people don't like me because I'm old, you see," says the grandfather confined to an institution for the aged. "I'm here for life I guess — life imprisonment."

Chronique de la vie quotidienne by Jacques Leduc (NFB) proved to be the epic series of the seminar. Leduc presented eight films produced between the years 1974-77 totalling 270 minutes. And the projection proved to be a treat instead of a treatment. Leduc films his research. His subjects are not set up to say certain things at the proper moment; rather, they live their lives on film. Consequently, their ordinary daily lives reflect a sense of quality and vitality.

Lundi, une chaumière, un coeur (Happiness Is...) crosscuts the construction of a home in the suburbs of Montreal, with an automobile show and a dating agency service. Three different stories are told in piecemeal. The film jumps from one episode to another, slowly unfolding the ironic whole. A father cradles a kid in each arm as a mother negotiates the idiosyncracies of home decorating. Cupboard knobs in the new house are traded for a linen closet. The house purchasers complain about items missing from the

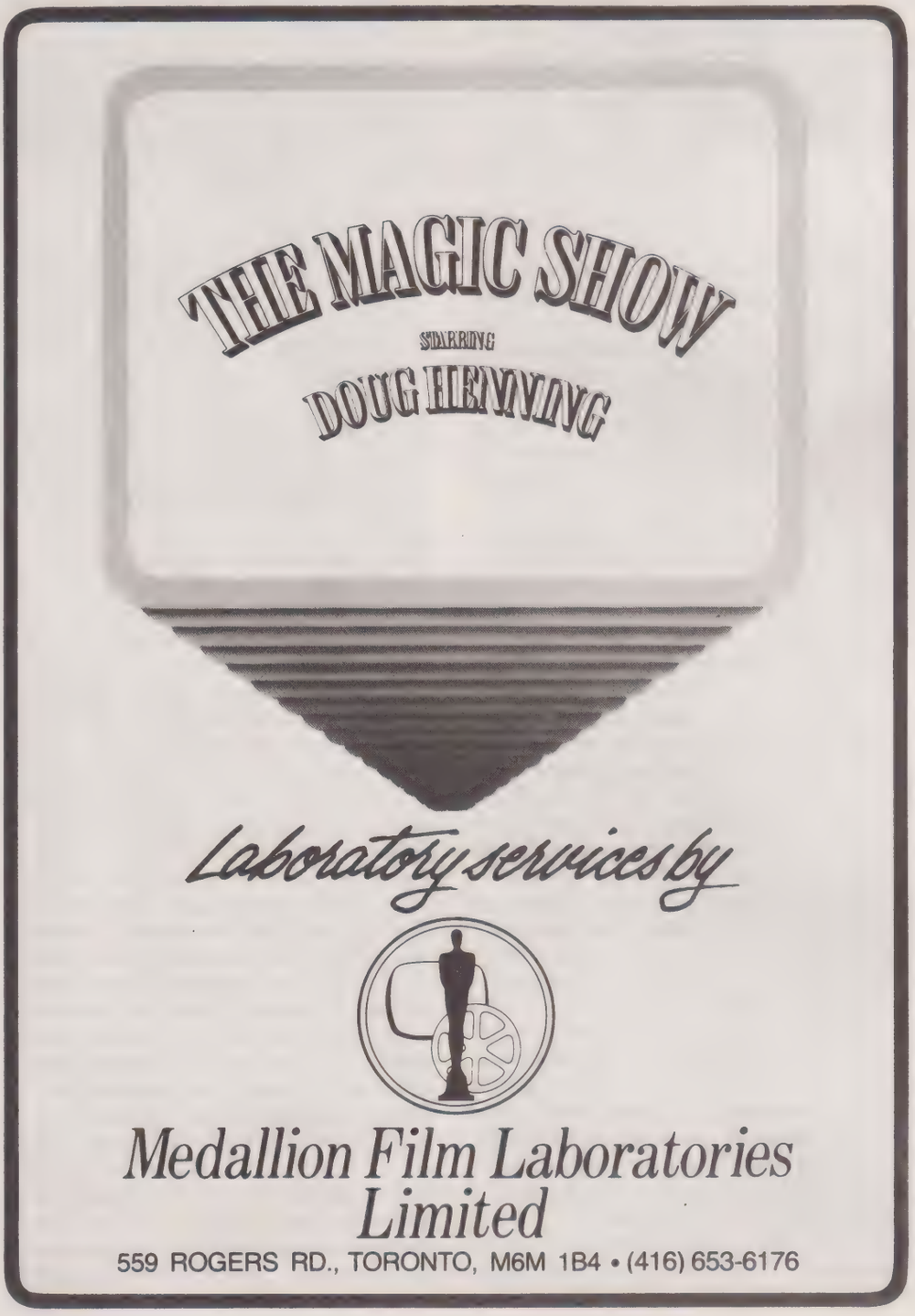

Photo : Frank Cole

A testimony to love and loyalty — Frank Cole's moving film, **A Documentary.**

advertising brochure. The contractor argues that "man can't always trust folders"...

Then we visit the Institute Humaniste, (dating service) where you can buy a real human being for $325. Here, the seller warns the anxious customer that if she can't meet the $200 down payment she might miss her chance to encounter the proper mate.

The recipe for happiness always seems to include items one cannot really afford.

Another form of documentary prompted a noticeable reaction. Following the example set by Frank Vitale's **Montreal Main** and Bozo Moyle's **The Rubber Gun** was Bruce Glawson's **Michael, A Gay Son.** This half-hour docu-drama used actors to document a real situation. The acting, however, was so good that most of the audience thought the film was a standard documentary. **Michael** centers around a homosexual who faces his family with the "facts" about his life. But the film does not limit itself to the subject of homosexuality. Everyone can relate to it because it shows the processes of parental repression towards children.

Moving in another direction was Don Winkler's **Travel Log** (NFB), which was definitely more experimental in nature. Using photographs, Winkler explores the strange feelings one experiences when travelling. The traveler is exposed to new sights and new sounds. As a result, a seemingly close relationship can easily fall apart in an unfamiliar setting. Isolated images of roadside restaurants, signs, detours and motel rooms indicate a barrenness accented only by the introspective voice-over of a woman reading excerpts from her diary. **Travel Log** documents a woman's persistent search for a place to stay.

Al Razutis, a B.C. filmmaker, presented **A Message from Our Sponsor**, which intercut TV commercials with excerpts from blatantly pornographic films. As explicit blow-jobs popped onto the screen, between the toothy smiles of young girls professing the values of super mouth washes, the film librarians in the audience grew silent. (The film must certainly be banned in Ontario.) Razutis' film said what people have been thinking, and what advertisers have been subliminally promoting for years — that is, if you improve people's sexual potential, they will buy anything you have to sell.

It is important not to ignore films which inform. **The Rites of Spring** by Michael Chechik (B.C.) considers the problem of slaughtering seals — particularly baby seals in the presence of their mothers. The film prompts the viewer to question the powers of government. Why has the CBC broadcast films favouring the killing of seals? Why has Chechik's film not been purchased by the CBC? Seals are killed not for food but for the making of beautiful coats and products like cosmetics. The film challenges human sensibility, and questions why people do the things they do.

Through the use of photographs, **For Twenty Cents A Day** by Jim Monro (B.C.) documents the depression years in B.C. Monro's presentation was explicit and informative.

The Last Days of Living by Malca Gilson (NFB) comes face-to-face with patients at the Palliative Care Unit of the Royal Victoria Hospital in Montreal. For an hour the viewer listens intently to individuals who know they are going to die, who know there is no hope, as they relate their feelings, both bitter and brave, about life and their imminent deaths.

A mother who has cancer is visited by her three small children on Mother's Day. She knows she has lost touch with them — that their father has taken her place — and that all she can do is smile and face the facts of life, as harsh as they might be. Her husband has told her, "Other people don't want to hear about your problems. They have problems of their own."

Boys will be Men by Don Rennick (NFB) documents, often through the use of a hidden camera, young adolescents from a poor neighbourhood bragging of their illegal exploits on the streets of Montreal. They rob, they steal, they destroy. Several nine to eleven-year-olds explain how they love to go downtown to Eaton's to rip-off anything they can get. One realizes that stealing is their favorite sport. It's fun. With enthusiasm, they even offered to rip-off a house for the film crew — for the sake of the movie... Their request was denied.

North China Factor (NFB) by Tony Ianzelo and Boyce Richardson came under strong attack when certain "experienced" filmmakers at the seminar professed a greater knowledge of China than they said the film offered them. But for those of us who were less familiar with China, the film introduced the People's Republic in a somewhat shocking framework — shocking perhaps, because we Westerners tend to expect others to think as we do. Every movement in China seems to come under someone's watchful eye. Why, even babies are placed in a straight, conforming position during their naps. "Socialism is Good" is sung at a wedding celebration, as well as, "Two tigers running fast" chanted to the tune of "Frère Jacques" — which stimulated laughter because the audience wondered how a French tune could be popular in the Far East. The idea of such community thinking is foreign and disturbing to a capitalistic world. Finally, all that is certain, is that the Chinese version of utopia remains a puzzle to the Western mentality.

The Grierson Seminar should not be ignored. It creates an opportunity for filmmakers to openly exchange ideas and show films that might not otherwise be shown under similar circumstances.

If nature abhors a vacuum, so should the creative artist.

INTRODUCING...

Keeping his cool no matter what, cinematographer Mark Irwin.

Mark Irwin

Keeping it Simple

It was the summer of 1978. On the set of **The Newcomers** all hell was breaking loose. Production assistants were scrambling all over the place, the afternoon's sets weren't built, and the generator truck had just knocked over a hydro pole, cutting off all power to the studio.

In the middle of this chaos was a mature, graying D.O.P. (director of photography). Like an island of serenity in a sea of madness, he talked softly with his assistant, helped out the grips and the gaffer, and joked with the director. Mark Irwin was 27 then.

Already he was a fixture in the Canadian film scene. He had shot four features and scores of documentary films. There were very few producers or directors in Toronto who hadn't worked with Irwin and whose films hadn't benefited from his craft.

Now, barely 30, and completely gray, his documentary work is too extensive to keep track of, and he has already shot ten features.

A personal style is emerging in his camera work, which Irwin describes as: "Less is more. I'm not a flashy person myself, and I want to reflect that in my work — straight, clean and simple."

Working with the minimum amount of lighting necessary for a scene, he tries to create a natural, source-lit feeling in his work. Possibly, he developed his sense of discretion from working with the master of restraint, Ed Hunt — for whom Irwin made his first two feature films.

"All the stories about Ed Hunt are true — in one form or another. Ed was very, very austere. He was a master of 'compression'. He knew what not to do because he couldn't afford it.

"When I got out of film school in '73, I worked with Ed as a focus-puller on **Diary of a Sinner**. I had never seen a 35 millimetre camera before.

" 'Do you know how to load one?' Ed asked.

" 'Oh yeah, hey! Look, I been to film school, right?' I didn't know up from down, but it didn't bother anyone. Jock Brandis was the D.O.P. The way Ed saw it, Jock had lights. So Ed would operate, Jock would light, and it would be great fun. And it was."

To this day, Irwin is very concerned with production restraints — time and money. Because he likes a source-lit, bounce-lit look, with no hard shadows, he uses few lights. As a result, he's a fast shooter, and his films have a natural look about them.

Sometimes this look descends into a murky darkness. The wrestling sequences in **Blood and Guts** (directed by Paul Lynch) are close, steamy, and smaller than life.

Irwin considers that Cronenberg's **The Brood** is a milestone for him. It has a consistently edgy look to it.

"In shooting **The Brood**, David just kept pushing me: make it darker, make it moodier. Most directors want that."

But many directors hesitate to go as far as they should. That kind of lighting doesn't flatter anyone, and many stars are reluctant to look bad. In the beginning, even Irwin was afraid to make the story look as dark and moody as it was. But finally, the story won out.

"The mood of the story isn't pretty, and in the end, the shooting went the distance." Since the film's release, Ed Hunt has taken to calling Irwin "The Prince of Darkness".

Irwin worries that people will pigeonhole him as a guy who shoots scary movies — a risk that becomes more pronounced as he continues to work with David Cronenberg. Together, they have shot **Fast Company, The Brood,** and **Scanners**, and seem to share a similarity of vision.

By fostering personal relationships with the directors he works with, Irwin is trying to break out of the mold in Canadian film production of the D.O.P. as technician.

"Quite often in Canada, the D.O.P. is hired before the director! And he's just an employee. There's no artistic consultation. Producers are too busy making deals and not making movies. So, it's really left up to the director, the first assistant, and the director of photography.

"When I meet a director I ask him 'What do you want to feel when you watch this after it's been shot?' That way I deal with him on an emotional level.

"Some directors will say 'Okay, a 28 here, a 55 here, and then over-the-shoulder with a 75. You got me?' Well, it's not that easy. It's not push-button filmmaking. I keep asking 'Is this shot necessary? What does it mean?' "

Though he shot three features in 1979, Irwin is now spending most of his time on documentaries and interviews. His only feature in 1980 was **Terror Eyes**, directed by Ken Hugues. It was shot in Boston for Lorimar.

Feature production in Canada has suffered a sharp decline this year. The features that have gone ahead have chosen to go with IATSE crews. Irwin refuses to join IATSE in Canada.

"I am a member of the Committee for an Independent Canada, and I have a visceral thing about not joining an American organization within this country. I don't want to belong to the branch-plant stepchild of an American parent union. That may be the Canadian way of life, but it has destroyed our labour situation. I just couldn't join.

"In Hollywood, it's a different thing. I'd join IATSE there." And Hollywood is Mark Irwin's ultimate destination, as it must be for anyone making movies.

"I don't think I want to live there, but I would like to work there. It has nothing to do with being a turncoat, turning my back on culture. But there is only one Hollywood.

"I study everything. I subscribe to every magazine — a magazine called **International Photographer** which does nothing but list who's shooting what, where, everywhere in the world. I read that and go to see films.

"How many people do you know that have seen **Gold** four times? I did, because Ousama Rawi (**The Black Windmill**) shot it!

"I saw **The Godfather** thirteen times! Just to look at Gordon Willis' work! If you look at Diane Keaton, she looks pretty bad. This is because the mood in that room had lit itself. I feel the same. I don't want pin-spots for ladies everywhere. The source of light has to be in this room. The room is what you're acting in. Leave it at that." Straight, clean and simple.

Charles Lazer

Stephen Young

All Things Considered

No place quite like home for actor Stephen Young.

Stephen Young doesn't actively seek press interviews, but when he's offered one, he doesn't refuse. "It's publicity," he says with a shy smile.

The fact that we don't have a "star" system in the Canadian film industry has long been the lament of many Canadian actors, including Stephen Young. In the twenty years that he's been acting, the CBC has employed him only once, three years ago, when he made a guest appearance on an episode of *Sidestreet*.

Young is visibly mystified by the CBC's attitude towards him. Although it's their prerogative not to hire him he comments, "They *bring* back a lot of other Canadian actors to work, but I *come* back and still nothing." So why does Young keep returning to Canada from California where he now lives? "It's simple; I like Toronto a lot. I was born and raised here. My family still lives in town."

After graduating from Forest Hills Collegiate where he was school president, Young went across Canada as a travelling salesman before taking an interest in the advertising trade. He joined a Toronto based agency as an office boy and it was there that Young was introduced to doing commercials. Next, he went to Robert

Lawrence Productions where he became an assistant producer/director on the television show *Far Away Places* with John Trent and Allan Cullenmore. "I was all of twenty at the time and I said, this is it; I want to go into the big time now," he recalls.

So, off he went with an aspiring actor friend of his and bought a one-way ticket to Rome where all the big productions were being made at that time. They landed in Naples aboard the Leonardo da Vinci and immediately got jobs as extras in Joseph L. Mankiewicz's **Cleopatra**, starring Elizabeth Taylor. On to Sicily next and Visconti's **The Leopard**, followed by more work in Spain in Nicholas Ray's **55 Days at Peking.**

At the end of a year's work in Portugal on a Walt Disney movie, Young found himself with $10,000 worth of travellers' cheques and a new wardrobe. At that moment he decided to be an actor — and packed his bags for Hollywood. A pit stop in Las Vegas cost him $9,000 which meant he had to make some money — fast. Six months in Hollywood yielded one job, a spot on the last episode of *The Untouchables*. Out of money, Young returned home to Toronto "C.O.D." Calls came through for work in Spain and England before he returned to Toronto again where he played in the soap opera *Moment of Truth*.

At the time, the producer, John Trent, was also casting the lead for *Seaway*, a Canadian adventure series. Young got the part. *Seaway* gave him national exposure and after the series ended, the offers started to roll in. Young decided on **Judd for the Defence**, an American courtroom drama series in which he co-starred with the late Carl Betz.

"And that's the way it all came about," Young offers with wide-eyed wonder, which nevertheless seems clouded by a sense of disappointment; for the business has changed since he first started out. "It's very much down to the dollars and cents now, which it was in the past too, but there was more showbusiness then." And, to make a living as an actor, he's had to compromise. He finds episodic television "too mundane and structured...it caters to the lowest common denominator."

Young's attitude about it all has been less torturous to him since he went through what he calls "male menopause" when he turned thirty. After both good and bad years there was a point when he wanted to give it all up. He found himself doing things that didn't interest him anymore and the whole film business seemed "very silly" to him.

"In a lot of ways it still does but it doesn't effect me anymore. I understand the business now and it doesn't bother me. The animosity is gone; everything is in perspective."

As for the future of the Canadian film industry, he believes it is in the hands of people like producers Garth Drabinsky and Henry Less. "They are exciting, fresh blood in an industry that has never had any. They're the ones who are going to make this country go, who *have* made it go in the film business, and that's what we need. These people are winners; they're aggressive. They are tuned into the fact that to create an industry here, we have to make a product that is going to be viewed by the rest of the world and not just by people in a certain area of town. We're starting to do this now. This year we had several films picked up by distributors in the United States, for example — **Meatballs, The Changeling** and **The Silent Partner.**

"In terms of the percentage of what we're getting, we are still a small entity out there in the world market. Although we've done very well in the last year, it's going to be a big problem maintaining our successful movie-making; we don't have the necessary studios and we have to keep tax shelters to protect the qualified producers and projects by keeping them funded.

"But everything goes through growing pains. We have finally broken through and we are going to have an industry here even when film production isn't running as heavily as it has been this past year. We've learned a hell of a lot — what it is to package a film properly, the elements needed for distribution and how far our crafts people and talent can stretch. Now I think our television industry is going to improve next."

Young's optimistic comments are genuine, but he warns against the ill-effects that too many smug complaints by ACTRA and other unions, against the use of foreign talent in Canada, may have on the film business here.

"We are still growing, a point I hope we don't lose sight of. We still need expertise from other areas of the world such as Hollywood and Europe to develop our potential. We can't cut that off, or we'd be cutting off our nose to spite our face. It always comes down to the fact that a million-dollar-plus budget depending on pre-sales needs justifying with big names. Investors ask, who is the exposed talent? Canadian names alone won't make it fly for the rest of the world."

What lies in the future for Stephen Young? He has just completed a pilot for a children's game show at the CFTO studios in Agincourt, and movie audiences will see him star in the low-budget, Canadian, "anti-horror" horror film **Deadline** (working title: Anatomy of a Horror) still to be released.

After successfully co-producing (with Joel B. Michaels and Garth Drabinsky) **The Silent Partner**, which won an Etrog for best picture in 1979, Young is currently developing two new projects which he hopes to produce in Canada. One is a remake of an old Hollywood comedy; the other is an original idea dealing with business, particularly, the sales-oriented pitch man.

Another of Young's main interests these days lies in broadcasting, either in news or sports reporting, or in hosting a talk show. He's had a taste of the latter, when occasionally guest-hosting the Alan Hamel Show. He wouldn't even mind doing another television series if it allowed him to travel across the country like *Seaway* did.

Despite his statement that "the kind of work available for 95% of the actors out there is crap," Young is quick to emphasize that there are also big pluses to being an actor: he mentions only one — no mandatory retirement age — before going on to say that, to have any longevity as an actor, one must try to make the acting secondary in life and get on with the process of living. In part, it is this philosophy that has enabled Young to come to terms with the business he has been devoted to for twenty years.

Connie Filletti

Erratum

In the last issue of *Cinema Canada* two errors were made in the In Progress report on **Threshold**: Jon Slan should have shared the producer's credit with Michael Burns; and, the director's name is correctly spelled Richard Pearce as it appeared in the credits, not "Pierce" as it ran in the article. Our apologies.

FILM REVIEWS

The fur soon flies behind the Iron Curtain for TV newsperson Nicole Thompson (Geneviève Bujold) and fur importer, Zak (Burgess Meredith) in **Final Assignment.**

Paul Almond's **Final Assignment**

In an early sequence of **Final Assignment**, directed by Paul Almond, TV newsperson Nicole Thompson, played by Geneviève Bujold, is seen interviewing an elderly fur importer played by Burgess Meredith. She asks him why he does business with Eastern Block countries and he replies that in times of trouble he likes to be where it's quietest, at the centre of the storm, floating like a butterfly. As it turns out, this remark doesn't happen to have a great deal to do with the film even though I think it's supposed to. But as a metaphor, it may have some application to the tempest called Canadian Film.

There was an inevitable excitement produced in this country when the film industry moved into higher production gear. For a while it seemed that movies were being made everywhere, and we looked on as producers' budget figures led us to think we'd entered the big time. Clouds began to roll in when these films started finding their ways to festivals; but now that some of these early efforts are turning up in local theatres, the predicted storm should be full blown. The problem is that in **Final Assignment**, our butterfly looks suspiciously like a caterpillar.

Final Assignment is a melodramatic-thriller. Its plot concerns the previously mentioned TV newsperson, with the perfect Canadian name of Nicole Thompson, who accompanies the Prime Minister of Canada on a state visit to Russia where she has been promised an exclusive interview with the Secretary General of the Communist Party. Our Nicole has all the superficialities of Hollywood's version of the 'new woman' as defined by Jane Fonda in **Julia** and **The China Syndrome**: she is strong, aggressive, intelligent, articulate, impassioned ; yet warm, sensitive, and believe it or not, intuitive.

While waiting for her interview, she manages to do *all* of the following: get arrested for interviewing a Soviet dissident; fall in love with a Russian bureaucrat played by Michael York, who is in charge of the press corps and personally responsible for landing Nicole's interview; save his life after he has fallen into some rapids; take *him* to bed; get involved with a Soviet scientist, Colleen Dewhurst, who can no longer tolerate the steroid experiments the Russians are performing on children; promise to make these experiments public in the West by smuggling out a video tape; and smuggle out the scientist's granddaughter who is badly in need of an operation that can only be done in Los Angeles (where else?). And she has to do all of this under the watchful eyes of an apparently incompetent KGB.

The director of **Final Assignment,** Paul Almond, was catapulted into this job as a last-minute replacement. Little in his background made him a logical choice for this type of film — except perhaps someone's idea of a potentially interesting reunion between him and his ex-wife and leading lady, Geneviève Bujold. Whatever... sitting through **Final Assignment** makes you feel that Almond didn't have either the time or the inclination to recover from the catapult. It is a film that has no sense of itself. Uncertain as to whether it wants to be a slick, stylish, fast-paced thriller or a moody, spy-from-the-cold, thoughtful drama, it ends up being drab and aimlessly plotted. It works for about five minutes when it manages to escape from dialogue that sounds constructed by committee. Within these five minutes, the editing is speeded up for the great getaway sequence and we are thrown into the emotional high-point of the film. But it would seem that the director felt we'd need some comic relief

here because he has his cast do bits of schtick. Relief? Hardly. The film just got going! Coming when it does, we aren't relieved, we're bewildered.

From bewilderment we are moved by an ending so preposterous that the silliness of the rest of the film pales in comparison. However, it is within the final sequence that the only shred of hope may be found. We see a circus troop crossing the border into Finland ahead of Nicole, the sick girl, and the fur importer. When they hear Michael York coming after them in a helicopter, they decide to make a run for it and end up in the troop's truck conspicuously marked "sirkus". The camera lingers on the word long enough for us to think perhaps Almond is attempting to formulate a commentary on all of this. If you give him the benefit of the doubt, it may cause you to smile but not the kind that will risk stretching your face.

It would be nice if we could get something positive out of this — if we could say, for example, that in spite of a moronic script, the film is a crisp and enticing thriller because of its technical excellence. But you can't. Technically, it's a mess: if they were after a grainy effect, it gets lost as you see people move in and out of focus; the editing is sloppy and the lighting differs sharply between interiors and exteriors. It isn't messy enough to be embarrassing, just enough to be considered amateurish.

This film might do better business if its producers were to open up their bookkeeping to an impartial judge and allow that person to oversee an audience participation contest called: How did these people spend seven million dollars? (The game is already being played by people who feel compelled to see Canadian movies and, to my knowledge, nobody's come up with the right answer.) My hunch is that most of the money went to renting every Lada within a 200-mile radius; but that hunch is predicated on the assumption that it costs more money to *rent* these cars than to *buy* them. If you have no trouble understanding the logic of that, then **Final Assignment** may just be the movie for you — and your tax accountant.

Watching **Final Assignment** is not unlike watching the 1969 Montreal Expos: you recognize the game but everything about the way it's being played is bush league. It took the Expos 10 years to begin to offer first-rate entertainment, and perhaps film viewers will have to wait as long. Unfortunately, baseball doesn't aspire to be anything but entertaining, whereas movies could be so much more.

Kevin Tierney

Final Assignment

d. Paul Almond **exec.p.** James Shavick, Arnold Kopelson **p.** Lawrence Hertzog **co-p.** Gail Thomson **d.o.p.** John Coquillon **p.des.** Harry Pottle **sc.** Marc Rosen **story** Gail Thomson **p.super.** Mychèle Boudrias **p.man.** Monique Messier **a.d.** Pedro B. Gandol (1st), Marie-Andrée Vinet, Pierre Poirier (2nd), Blair Roth (3rd), Mireille Goulet (special) **cont.** Suzanne Chiasson-Jonassen **cast. d.** Daniel Hausmann, Barbara Cartwright (asst.) **cast. consult.** Eva Langbord **p.co-ord.** Daniel Louis **unit man.** Francine Forest **loc./unit man.** Jacques Normand **asst. unit man.** Nathalie Moliavko-Visotzky **loc. man.** Michel Veilleux, Cary Ross **p.sec.** Jacqueline Wanner **asst. to p.** Midge Keith, Penny French **asst. to d.** Christopher Wallace **cam.op.** Herbert Smith **cam. asst.** Daniel Jobin (1st), Mathieu Décary (2nd) **2nd unit cam.** Alain Dostie, Daniel Vincelette (asst.) **sd.** Henri Blondeau, Richard Nichol **boom** Normand Mercier, Philippe Planas **gaf.** Buddy Bradley, Kevin O'Connell **best boy** Gerald Proulx **3rd elec.** Arshad Shah, Robert Lapierre **key grip** Michel Chohin, Don Caulfield **asst.grip** Jean Trudeau (1st), Pierre Lapointe (2nd) **stunt coord.** Marcel Fournier **stunts** Yves Fournier, Lyne Fournier **sp. efx.** Joseph Elsner **art d.** Jocelyn Joly, René Petit, Raymond Dupuis (asst.), Fernand Durand (asst.) **prop. master** Normand Simpson, Susan Scott (asst.) **set dress.** François Seguin **set props** Maurice Leblanc, Jean-Pierre Laurendeau **prop. buyer** Frances Calder **vehicle co-ord.** Herminio Bilhete **p.draughtsman** Dai Moran **head carp.** Claude Simard **cost. des.** Nicoletta Massone **ward.** Nicole Pelletier **dresses** Francesca Chamberland, Paulette Gagnon, Michèle Lafaille **hair** Huguette Roy, Gaétan Noiseux (asst.) **wig specialist** Denis Girard **make-up** Diane Simard, Lyne Desmarais (asst.), Manon Parent (asst.) **dial. dub. ed.** Robin Leigh **foley sd.** Andy Malcolm **asst. sd. ed.** Tony Currie **sd. re-rec.** Gary Bourgeois, Tony Van Den Akker **foley rec.** Jack Heeren **asst. pic. ed.** Jacqueline Carmody, Susan Shanks **themes perf.** Bowkun Trio **p.acct.** Diane Arcand, Muriel Lizé-Pothier, Michéline Trepanier **equip. store keep.** Gilles Béchard **stills** Alan Carruthers **pub.** The Network **unit pub.** Denise Di Novi **stock footage superv.** Graham Seaton **Russian tech. consult.** Elena Baranova, Tomas Shuman **apprent. cam. asst.** Claude-Simon Langlois **apprent. asst. d.** Elvira Rychlak **apprent. asst. sd. ed.** Marta Nielsen **p.a.** Shelley Veinish, Ina Voldar, Pierre Anctil, Gisèle Bolduc, Viateur Castonguay, Michel Emond, Pierre Forest, Steven Manners, Denis Martin, Alain Michaud, Jean-Pierre Sabourin, Michel Veillette **post p.a.** Sandra Kane **l.p.** Geneviève Bujold, Michael York, Burgess Meredith, Colleen Dewhurst, Michelle Mostovoy, Richard Gabourie, Len Doncheff, Alexandra Stewart, Septimui Sever, David McIlwraith, Renato Trujillo, Timothy Webber, John Granik, Jack Fisher, John Grant, Dave Patrick, Rachel Wilkinson, Norman Tabiss, Noel Ross, Larry Schwartz, Gordon Warren, Ian Stephens, Wally Bondarenko, George Juriga, Patrick Peuvion, Mikhail Berkut, Bradford Murdoch, Roman Izbinsky, William Siemienski, Erastia Sever, Elena Baranova, Kim Yaroshevskaya, Alex Dmitriev, Wanda Arleninow, Katya Ladan, Kelly Gallagher, Anna Familiant, Anna Chomsky, Mary Bell, Walter Bolton, Michael Fostady, Tom Kovacs, Jacques Canto, Elizabeth Dufresne, Alexander Maidan, Vlasta Vrana, Morris Goldsmith, Michel Maillot, George Popovich, Michael Mololey, John Brodych, Nicholas Goursky, Paul Zolner, Jorma Lindquist, Robert King, Boris arleninow, Ivan Honstacharow, Abollon Kallaur, Damir Andrei, Neil Affleck, Tony Angelo, Laura Riga, Josée Beauregard, Serge Dobrovlianski, Ragean Gauthier, Hugette Rioux, Jeff Ladenheim, Bill Stewart, Andrew Semple, Claude-Simon Langlois **col.** 35mm **p.c.** Cinema One Films Inc. **running time** 101 min. **dist.** Pan Canadian.

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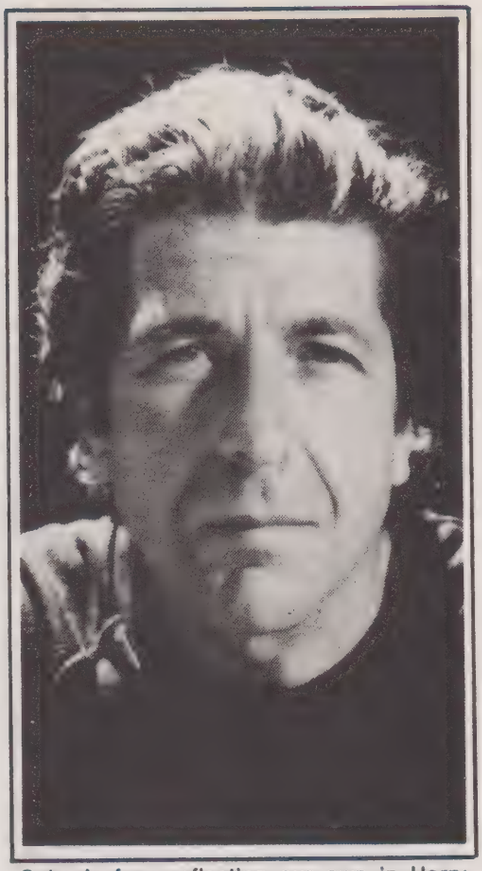
Harry Rasky's **The Song of Leonard Cohen**

Leonard Cohen sits with his guitar on the balcony railing of his Montreal apartment, picking the opening notes of *Bird on a Wire*, his classic elegy to his own freedom. The image dissolves into soft spotlights as the composition changes to Cohen singing on stage, a troubadour bathed in crimson. Then suddenly we see the golden torso of a statue; the shot widens to reveal it as an angel figure among several others adorning a building. The camera pans to include the Eiffel tower, and zooms in on a pigeon in the foreground. Cut to a rear view of a bus labouring up a rainy highway incline...

This is the initial sequence of Harry Rasky's feature-length documentary **The Song of Leonard Cohen**. Like Rasky's masterful **Homage to Chagall**, **Song** is a highly personal, remarkable act of sympathetic imagination. The director's interpretive hand is always there, but Cohen somehow speaks for himself, because the filmmaker is so closely attuned to the man's vision, his inflation, and his ironic wit. Sumptuous visuals of women, art, architecture, or children complement the longing and potency of Cohen's lyrics. The film follows Cohen, with his friends and his band, through the changing environments of his world — Montreal, and five European cities on a recent concert tour — and through the many frozen moments of his past — haunting still photographs of Cohen's many faces, his family, and his women. The finely mixed soundtrack consists of Cohen's music, conversations, poems, and commentary, full of ambiguous wisdom, melancholy, humour, and light self-parody.



Cohen's face reflecting our own in Harry Rasky's sensitive film, **The Song of Leonard Cohen.**

Much of the film dwells on the minstrel's face, exposing on it the roughening effects of time and women, often in very long takes. (Later Cohen says, "I like to see the marks on people".) Rasky seems to be saying that if we look at Cohen long and closely enough, we will recognize him for the archetypcal 'shapeshifter' that he is, and we'll see our face in his. The effectiveness of this approach depends upon the extent to which we can identify with Cohen as the artist, the Lazarus-like lady's man, the deeply wounded insecure Canadian, the wandering Jew, the city, the alien in strange lands...

In one sequence, Rasky examines the contents and ambiance of Cohen's apartment, while Cohen comments on the camera's curious, hand-held investigation. As we see the kitchen sink, the cramped bathtub, and the deliberately austere furnishings, Cohen insists that it's "voluptuously" comfortable because "it's got everything you need." Cohen's careful enactment of luxury in simplicity ("I've always liked white rooms") takes on new dimensions of irony and poignancy as the film progresses.

The film is about the Canadian condition, as is some of Cohen's poetry. He translates a song on his tape recorder from the French; in it, a wanderer speaks of his "most unfortunate country". When asked, Cohen admits that he identifies with that voice "a little bit." He takes a very long ride through the streets of Montreal in a calèche, wearing a yellow T-shirt which says Hollywood YMCA. In his favourite greasy spoon, Solomon's, he gropes with a very intense look in his eyes for something to say about French Canada, and then recalls that the motto of Quebec is "Je me souviens" — "I Remember" (which is a very good point). The juxtaposition of the poet at home and on the road repeatedly implies the truth

The Song of Leonard Cohen

p./d./sc. Harry Rasky **mus.** "Passenger" with Steve Meador (drums), Charles Beck (guitar), Paul Ostermayer (saxophone, flute & clarinet), Bill Ginn (piano & synthesizer), Mitch Watkins (guitar) and Jonn Bilezikjian (mandolin & oud), Rafik Akopian (violin). Accompanying vocalists: Sharon Robinson, Jennifer Warnes **ed.** Paul Nikolich **p. man.** Len D'Agostino **p.a.** Aili Suurallik **d.o.p.** Kenneth W. Gregg, c.s.c. Additional photography: Jean Reitberger **film quality control** Jim Lo **sd. rec.** Erik Hoppe **re rec** Terry Cooke **light** Erik Kristensen **asst. cam.** John Maxwell **graphic design** Geoff Cheesbrough **graphic photog.** Robert Mistynyn **stills** Hazel Field **l.p.** Leonard Cohen, Irving Layton, Mort Rosengarten **p.c.** CBC **running time** 90 min. **colour** 16 mm.

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that most of us have no sense of national identity until we leave home.

Rasky gradually reveals Cohen's private and public relationships with women: asked at one point if he is obsessed with women, Cohen replies that it's the Divine Scheme, and everyone is preoccupied with the opposite sex. The sequence in which he sings "Won't you let me see your naked body" is superb concert footage, capturing the self-conscious smiles on girls' faces as they watch the brilliant, twisted veteran with the blue guitar. It is also about as close as Rasky gets, within the boundaries of CBC decorum, to including the visceral, Dionysian side of Cohen in **Song**. Where is the possessed, vindictive persona of a poem like **O Wife Unmasked**, "with his mind on cunt/ on cunt only/ heart money attention talent art/ tuned entirely to cunt", who recalls that "her buttocks relax in my hands/ like meat freshly killed"? Wisely restrained for family viewing.

When Irving Layton visits Cohen with his wife, he offers many extravagant words of praise for Cohen's genius, and remarks on the appeal of their poetry: "When you don't feel secure, when you don't feel happy — that's being Jewish!" According to Layton, the modern-Western-urban neurosis for which they are the voice is basically a Jewish world view. (Would Woody Allen agree?)

When the soundtrack takes up *So Long Marianne*, there is a nice series of stills of her and Cohen in the sunwashed simplicity of Greece, and Rasky creates a powerful dissolving and expanding image of her as the Ideal Woman, the blond Muse. She is contrasted later with Suzanne (not the one in the song), Cohen's dusky, exquisite Gypsy Wife. She appears in colour, with their two beautiful children, primarily as another incarnation of Cohen's desire, and his loss. We begin to see that **Song** is also about nostalgia.

As a concert film, **Song** does for Cohen what **The Last Waltz** did for The Band. It's a rich evocation of his lifestyle on the road, the compromises, the "forms of boredom disguised as poetry", the idolatry and rewards. The knowledge that "the singer must die for the life in his voice" is never far from the surface.

In the final sequence of the film, a series of flashbacks to the multiple stances and costumes in which Cohen has appeared acknowledges the iconoclastic emphasis of the film's visuals; the way they meld with the song **That's No Way to Say Goodbye** is another example of Paul Nikolich's sensitive, seamless editing. **Song** is a complex portrait of Cohen with the landscape of his precarious, perhaps broken marriage of Heaven and Hell; in the process it becomes a poetic investigation of our preoccupations and anxieties. For my tastes, the ending would have benefited from something like Cohen's commentary on his wry prose-poem, *How to Speak Poetry*, in the collection *Death of a Lady's Man*: "I hate him for this. He will pay for this religious advertisement...I hate his fucking face, all serious with concern. Don't let him go to the good movie, and don't let him hear the merry tunes in the Music Hall. Never let him sing again. And let him sit outside with his stinking educational corpse while the stripper on the little gilded stage turns us all on."

Chris Lowry

Martin Lavut's **War Brides**

It is a truism, in fact almost a platitude, that Canadian movies tend to be about losers. At times, they certainly seem to have been *made* by losers; so that the audience ends up losing as well. What a pleasure then to see **War Brides**, a CBC feature-length film for television in which everybody wins, on both sides of the screen.

War Brides was written by Grahame Woods, produced by Bill Gough, and directed by Martin Lavut — all men with established credentials, recently from the CBC's *For The Record* series. However, the four women who star as the brides (Elizabeth Richardson, Sonja Smits, Sharry Flett, and Wendy Crewson) are none of them household names — at least, not yet. Geoffrey Bowes, Layne Coleman, Kenneth Pogue and Timothy Webber, as the husbands, come off just as well.

Forsaking their homes for love in a strange land are the **War Brides** (left to right) Sharry Flett, Wendy Crewson, Elizabeth Richardson and (front) Sonja Smits.

The four couples are presented in a believable and winning way. At the outset, we see a trainload of frazzled women winding its way across the winter landscape. We care about the women immediately, in a warm, old-fashioned way, as we follow them to their destinations.

Producer Bill Gough says of the film, "We've tried for the best in '40's movies, both in style and in entertainment value, in addition to revealing many aspects of what Canada was like at that time." Certainly the film does have the feel of the '40s, from the hairstyles, to the sounds of the radio, even to the embossed sheet-metal wall of a telephone booth in a hotel hallway. The new compositions and re-recordings of period music, by Tommy Ambrose and musical arranger Rick Wilkins, seem aptly sentimental but never cloyingly nostalgic.

Some moments stand out. Sharry Flett, as the deserted wife, has one of those spunky roles that are uncommon in these days of the woman-in-jeopardy television film: she brings to it so much character, determination, and humour that almost all her scenes are a delight. Layne Coleman plays the soldier who brings back a German wife. He is neither your stereotyped stolid Maritimer, nor the embittered young man back from the war, but a finely-drawn composite. Writer Woods has given him a telling scene that he handles particularly neatly. He is teaching his wife to drive, and while she is behind the wheel, tensely manipulating the big truck, he takes advantage of her preoccupation to tell her how beautiful she is and how much he loves her. He knows that she is too busy trying to drive to react effusively and perhaps embarrass him.

Doris Petrie plays his mother, a beaten-down farm wife. Although she has little to say until later in the film, she still manages to convince us of just how hard life has

been; and how the conflict resulting from the 'enemy' (German) girl in her house and in her town is tearing her apart.

Another moment: Timothy Webber and Wendy Crewson, as the couple for whom everything goes well, sit on a park bench talking about having another child. The husband says quietly that if he had a son, he wouldn't want him to go to war. Up to this point he has not mentioned anything about his experiences in the war, or anything else of importance. His wife smiles at him uncertainly, not knowing quite how to take it. The scene isn't milked, but we get a lot in a few seconds.

Alberta Watson has the small role of Geoffrey Bowes's old girlfriend, who tried to commit suicide when she heard he had married and who starts an affair with him after his return. She has little to say or do but she is a compelling presence, a fascinating blend of the neurotic and the firm.

War Brides must be judged a success — the result of the firm grasp that is demonstrated by all concerned in the conception and execution of the film. It succeeds as a made-for-television film by any standards — and in many cases transcends those standards.

Alan Stewart

War Brides

d. Martin Lavut **p.** Bill Gough **assoc. p.** Janet Kranz **sc.** Grahame Woods **story ed.** Alice Sinclair **a.d.** Rob Malenfant (1st), John Rainey (2nd), Richard Beecroft (3rd) **unit man.** Alan McPherson **cont.** Carol Fisher **p. sec.** Vicki Ohashi **d.o.p.** Vic Sarin, Michael Storey, Dave Towers **mus.** Tommy Ambrose, Rick Wilkins (musical arranger) **sd.** Gerry King **light.** Archie Kay, R. Huckfield, J. Wilson, Len Watier **boom** Ian Challis **designer** Barbara McLean, Marian Wihak (asst.) **set dec.** Al Laurie, Bruce Ruppell, Doug Tiller **cost.** Suzanne Mess, Ted Burbine, J. Alles **make-up** Daisy Bijac, Sandra Sokol, M. Koekkce **hair** Anita Miles **design co-ord.** Torben Madsen **staging** W. Holcombe, B. Stunden, R. Stos **sp. efx.** Sandy Smith **cast.** Gail Carr, Annika McLachlan **post-p.** Toni Mori **ed.** Myrtle Virgo **l.p.** Elizabeth Richardson, Geoff Bowes, Sonja Smits, Layne Coleman, Sharry Flett, Kenneth Pogue, Wendy Crewson, Timothy Webber, Mary Savidge, Joseph Shaw, Alberta Watson, Sean Sullivan, Doris Petrie **p.c.** CBC **running time** 120 min. **colour** 16mm.

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Louise Carré's
Ça peut pas être l'hiver, on n'a même pas eu d'été

Given our culture's current preoccupation with the problems of women, it comes as no surprise to find that someone has finally made a film about the adjustment of a mature woman to widowhood. The subject is a potentially challenging one: as a theme, widowhood in late middle-age has none of the notoriety or easy appeal of, say, divorce earlier on. This ought to make it more difficult to incorporate the many new clichés which now plague "trendy" films about the changing role of women.

Nonetheless, **Ça peut pas...** is curiously reminiscent of precisely such a film — Paul Mazursky's **An Unmarried Woman**. Admirers of this film will concede that its success was due much more to the performance of Jill Clayburgh and to the timeliness of the subject matter than to the script, which was, all things considered, rather flimsy. **Ça peut pas...** has neither Clayburgh (though Charlotte Boisjoli certainly puts in an adequate performance) nor a "hot topic", — nor, for that matter, glamorous Hollywood sets. So, the script has to stand on its own. And it does, but just barely.

Filmed mostly in the area around Sorel, it tells the story of Adèle Marquis, a comfortably-off 57-year-old woman who loses her husband after almost forty years of marriage, during which she raised eight children. Her immediate reaction is naturally one of depression, but after a winter of mourning she decides she's had enough. A few surprise moves — like taking in a boarder to avoid selling her heavily-mortgaged home; and a few lucky breaks — the boarder turns out to be a suitably personable widower in need of companionship; and Adèle gradually regains full control of her life. She changes her hairdo, learns to drive, goes places she has never been before, all the while gradually developing a discreet friendship with Germain, the new man. But when he proposes marriage she prefers — surprise!— to opt out — rejoicing, though not without some trepidation, in

Ça peut pas être l'hiver...

p. Louise Carré **d./sc.** Louise Carré **mus.** Marc O'Farrell **d.o.p.** Robert Vanherweghem, Daniel Fitzgerald (asst.) **light.** James Gray, Denis Ménard **grip** Claude Brasseur **cont.** Claudette Messier **ward.** Martine Fontaine **stills** Takashi Seida **unit pub.** Danielle Sauvage **sd. efx.** Michel Charron, Ken Page, Roger Lamoureux **sd. mix. (mus.)** Louis Hone **sd. mix.** Jean-Pierre Joutel **titles** Jean-Marc Brosseau **NFB liaison** Gaétan Martel **ed.** André Théberge **sd. ed.** Anne Whiteside **song interp.** Louise Lemire, Pière Sénécal **lyrics** Louise Carré **mus.** Marc O'Farrell **piano/voice** Mario Parent **1st unit/a.d.** Marianne Feaver **p. man.** Daniel Louis **sd.** Alain Corneau, Marcel Fraser (asst.) **loc. man.** Claire Stevens **make-up** Brigitte McCaughry **props** Charles Bernier, Marie Dupont (asst.) **sec.** Carole Villandré **p.a.** Louis Douville, Iolande Paré **2nd unit/a.d.** Pierre Gendron **p. man.** Marie-Andrée Brouillard **sec.** Suzanne Comtois **sd.** Jacques Blain, Marcel Fraser, Yvon Benoit (asst), Esther Auger (asst.) **make-up** Micheline Foisy **props** Pierre Fournier **p.a.** Louis Gascon **l.p.** Charlotte Boisjoli, Jacques Galipeau, Céline Lomez, Mireille Thibault, Serge Bélair, Daniel Matte, Marie-Ève Doré, Martin Neufeld, Peter Neufeld, Anne-Marie Ducharme, Gaétane Laniel, Illia Esopos, Guillaume Tremblay, Isabelle Doré, Lucie Mitchell, Guy Bélanger, Hélène Grégoire, Louise Arbique, Pepper, Jean Richard, Annick Chartier, Réal Côté, Félix Chartier, Wilner Boulin, Jean Belzil-Gascon, Claude Saint-Germain, Martin Lyons, Kathleen Butler, Marjorie Godin **p.c.** La maison des quatre **running time** 87 min. **col.** 16mm **dist.** J.A. Lapointe Films Inc. (Quebec).

Heart-to-heart discussions between daughter (Céline Lomez) and mother-in-law (Charlotte Boisjoli) in **Ça peut pas être l'hiver.**

her new-found freedom. The film ends with Germain, and her family, seeing her off on a long-desired trip to Japan. As the car she is in pulls out of her driveway, the camera zooms in on the "For Sale" sign which now graces her lawn. The home which she had so tenaciously held on to, and into which she had even taken a "surrogate husband" to try and maintain a reasonable facsimile of the previous order, is now paying for a jaunt to the Orient.

This note of consolidated independence brings to mind a little too readily the ending of **An Unmarried Woman**, in which Clayburgh says "no" to a gorgeous hunk of an artist (Alan Bates) in order to pursue her independent life — the new "happy ending" now that marriage is out. But even were this not the case, **Ca ne peut...** would still have difficulty qualifying as much more than a satisfactory made-for-TV drama.

This is due largely to the film's somewhat perfunctory script which, although it occasionally hints at aspects of Adèle's inner life, seems mostly intent on merely documenting the requisite exterior phases of her evolution. We see Adèle going through all the prescribed motions, even having all the prescribed problems, but little else.

The realization that her marriage was really far from satisfactory, her desire for independence from her children, her daughter's discomfort at Adèle's new life could, if developed, have lent the film some much-needed depth (not really provided by the black-and-white flashbacks to her married life). Instead, the realization about her marriage comes about so mechanically that it almost seems a device designed to bring her out of her depression: one day Adèle stops in at a local café and encounters another widow who tells her how much she misses her own husband because he had been, above all, a friend to her. The conversation enlightens Adèle and almost instantaneously brings to a close her period of mourning. On to the next phase...

The film's only real moments of depth are provided by Adèle's reactions to her daughter's feeling of rejection. She realizes, among other things, that as a young woman she had always rejoiced much more at the birth of a son than of a daughter. Over dinner, Adèle confesses to Germain that the prospect of having a son had always been more exciting because — although she could not have formulated it at the time — men live *real* lives, while women are forced to live "in their heads".

I suspect that the lack of more moments which might have lent some degree of individuality and depth to Adèle's drama may be due to Louise Carré's desire to make her heroine a sort of "everywoman", a perfectly ordinary woman who lives a painful but otherwise ordinary experience. However, as a result, her story takes on the characteristics of a case history. Adèle's experience, rather than universal, all too often appears prototypical.

Lucienne Kroha

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Struggling to keep her sanity, Marguerite (Céline Lomez) battles for survival.

Freedom at all costs for the rebellious *coureur de bois*, Étienne Brûlé (Raymond Cloutier).

Spirit of the River to China

Marooned in the Land God Gave to Cain

Peter Rowe's **The Spirit of the River to China** and **Marooned in the Land God Gave to Cain** are blends of documentary and melodrama in an attempt to recreate history. "Gritty Sixteenth-Century Realism," according to *Maclean's*. The stories are true, the telling of them raises some questions.

River to China depicts the confrontation between the young Father Jean de Brébeuf (Guy Thauvette) and the *coureur de bois*, Étienne Brûlé (Raymond Cloutier), who has been assigned to assist Brébeuf in his mission to convert the Hurons. Brûlé resents Brébeuf's attempts to undermine his freedom. He sabotages the mission by refusing to translate to the Hurons, and by his direct affronts to Brébeuf, through pranks that demonstrate his unremitting contempt.

Brébeuf endures by converting these humiliations into all but welcomed harbingers of inevitable martyrdom. Brébeuf proves himself Brûlé's equal but, much to Rowe's credit, not Brûlé's superior. Both men are on the path to martyrdom. We begin the film with Brûlé's recurrent nightmare — a nightmare that grew out of his torture by the Iroquois. By the end of the film, Brûlé's secular independence, like Brébeuf's theological contributions, is firmly enshrined by our knowledge of his morality.

Marooned, though more optimistic, is an equally poignant tale. In the summer of 1548, a vengeful ship's captain deliberately maroons Marguerite de Roberval (Céline Lomez) on a deserted island off the coast of Labrador. Joined by her lover, François, she begins a two-and-a-half year battle for survival and sanity. François cannot adapt to an environment that is both idyllic and potentially lethal. He dies. Marguerite gives birth. The baby dies. Yet, by the time she is rescued, Marguerite de Roberval has succeeded in becoming the first white woman to come to terms with the New World wilderness.

Marooned is sustained marvelously by Lomez's performance. Her expressions of quiet strength and her ability to portray cathartic suffering are reminiscent of Carole Laure's early work. She clearly outshines the performances of Thauvette and Cloutier who, though convincing, appear hampered by accents deliberately thickened for no apparent reason. (We realize from the outset that their English dialogue is to be taken for French.)

In both films, Rowe makes the most of his limited resources. The borrowed artifacts from the Huron Indian Village at Midland, the few sets, the abundant nature photography are all used in a manner that prevents the viewer from missing what might be regarded as higher production values.

If Rowe displays the usual Canadian talent for making due, he is, unfortunately, also constrained by the common Canadian striving for thematic adequacy. Perhaps this is the curse that goes with the Griersonian legacy. Perhaps it is simply the constraint of his backers, the CBC and potential educational rentals. But both these pocket epics are cluttered with mad pursuits of every possible avenue of social and personal exploration.

River to China is not simply focused on that rather complex moment in the evolution of imperialist conquest: the transfer of power from maverick explorers to the first representatives of the conquerer's social order. It must also teach us something about the way of life of the Hurons and the Iroquois. We learn about Brûlé's background and psychology, about Brébeuf and, of course, about the nature of faith as understood in Seventeenth-Century France.

Marooned is even busier. In its 27 minutes, the film takes up: Marguerite's coming to terms with the natural world around her; nature's cycles; Marguerite's affair with François; François' poetry;

the irony of superstition becoming valid (as Marguerite sinks into a satanic paganism on the Isle of Devils) and, parenthetically, the mores and social order of Old and New France. Should we still feel that we have not had enough, voice-overs frame both films with factual narrative.

It is not that we don't want to learn about any of these things. It is just that the combined presence of so many motifs robs the films of a sense of integrity and, paradoxically, makes us see them as incomplete. They are not, as advertised, shorts. Rather, they are manic features and, as such, are a bitter commentary on the priorities of our current film industry. Indeed, Rowe might not be capable of a **Lawrence of Arabia** or **Dersu Usala** — films with themes not dissimilar to those seen here. But, having seen Rowe's work, it is impossible to believe that there are no Canadian subjects worthy of epic treatment, no indigenous approaches to that treatment, and no alternatives to horror or cops, the next time someone puts up $10 million for a "Canadian" feature.

As is, **River to China** and **Marooned** work in the same way that Griffith's short films worked to transform abundant subject matter into concise presentation. Ideas are reduced to physical metaphors; subtle changes become overly dramatic heroics. Brébeuf befriends the Hurons by rescuing an Indian maiden from the rapids. He and Brûlé finally settle their differences by playing the old Indian fire game, joining hands over a burning ember until someone cries uncle.

Like Griffith, Rowe's treatment of time can be effective — or abusive. Marguerite, after a two-minute pregnancy, gives birth upon discovering François's corpse. A little later, her descent into paganism consumes 90 seconds of screen time, during which we see much wood burning.

Certain ill-conceived aspects of the films — poor lines, for example — leave little room for forgiveness. Marguerite's protestation that François "is not a sewer rat — he's a poet" might be eclipsed if there was more room for better dialogue: as is, it diminishes his characterization for the remaining 15 minutes of his life. Similarly, both films' monotonous, overblown music would not be so unbearable if thinned out among more silent passages.

If done well — as they are here, despite their flaws — films of this particular format can be engrossing. There can even be, as Griffith proves, a little room for charm. Realistically, however, subject matter that wishes to break out of unnatural time constraints will eventually call for substance in a way that cannot be denied. Griffith solved this problem by inventing the feature. Perhaps we can do the same.

Seth Feldman

The Spirit of the River to China

d. Peter Rowe **p./sc.** Barry Pearson, Peter Rowe **exec. p.** Gerald M. Soloway **d.o.p.** Paul Van Der Linden **or. mus.** Bob McMullin **series theme composed by** Michael Spivak **ed.** Allan Collins **cost. design./construc.** Antoinette Ellard **props** Robert Paquette **p. man./a.d.** Barry Bergthorson **2rd asst. d.** Holly Dale **3rd asst. d.** Lazar Avramov **cont.** Marie-Thérèse Boily **loc. man.** Marjorie Lamb **sd. record.** Brian Vary **boom** John Gundy **sd. ed.** Arnie Stewart **sd. re. rec.** Len Abbott **stunt co-ord.** Dwayne McLean **make-up** Pip Ayotte **spec. efx.** Martin Malivoire **gaf.** Barry Reid **key grip** Lee Wright **cam.** Michael Szucs (1st asst.), Wendy Walgate (2nd asst.) **2nd unit cine.** Wolf Ruck **asst. ed.** Carolyn Zeifman **grip** David Zimmerman **best boy** Sandy Carroll **props asst.** Michael Rea **ward. asst.** Isabelle Depelteau **p. sec.** Angela Gruenthal **pub.** Bonnie Palef **titles** N.A.C. **stills** Jonathon Kay **p.a.** Rick Meldazy, Martin Myers, Karyn Schwinghamer **l.p.** Raymond Cloutier, Guy Thauvette, Graham Greene, Fern Henry, Robert Daviau, Erroll Kinistino **narrator** Donald Brittain **p.c.** Rosebud Films (1979), produced with the assistance of Wintario **col.** 16mm **running time** 25 min. **dist.** Rosebud Films.

Marooned in the Land God Gave to Cain

d. Peter Rowe **p./sc.** Barry Pearson, Peter Rowe **exec. p.** Gerald M. Soloway **d.o.p.** Paul Van Der Linden **or. mus.** Bob McMullin **series theme composed by** Michael Spivak **ed.** Allan Collins **art d.** Carol Spier, Alfred Benson (asst.) **cost. design./construc.** Antoinette Ellard **props** Robert Paquette **cine./winter scenes** James B. Kelly CSC **p. man./a.d.** Barry Bergthorson **2nd a.d.** Holly Dale **cont.** Marie-Thérèse Boily, Nancy Eagles **p. co-ord.** Marjorie Lamb **sd. rec.** Brian Avery **boom** John Gundy **sd. ed.** Arnie Stewart **sd. re.rec.** Len Abbott **stunt co-ord.** Dwayne McLean **stunts** Karin Pike, Ed Hannaford **make-up** Pip Ayotte **spec. efx.** Martin Malivoire **lighting** Barry Reid, Jock Brandis **key grip** Lee Wright **construc. man.** Bill Harman **1st asst. cam.** Michael Szucs, Rick Wincenty **2nd asst. cam.** Wendy Walgate **2nd unit cine.** Wolf Ruck **asst. ed.** Carolyn Zeifman **grips** David Zimmerman, Carlo Campagna **best boy** Sandy Carroll **props asst.** Michael Rea **ward. asst.** Sara-Gene Foster **p. sec.** Angela Gruenthal **pub.** Bonnie Palef **titles** N.A.C. **stills** Jonathon Kay, John Williamson **p.a.** Rick Meldazy, Karyn Schwinghamer **l.p.** Céline Lomez, Jean-Jacques Blanchet, Jean-Louis Roux, John Friesen, Winston Rekert, Ara Hovanessian **narrator** Donald Brittain **p.c.** Rosebud Films (1979), produced with the assistance of the Canada Council **col.** 16mm **running time** 25 min. **dist.** Rosebud Films.

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BOOKSHELF by george l. george

Directors' Skills and Techniques

A systematic survey of directors past and present has been undertaken by Boston publisher G.K. Hall & Co. in two parallel series. Seven directors grouped in the "Guide to References and Resources" series (Ronald Gottesman, editor) were reviewed in the December issue of *Cinema Canada*. In addition, **Stanley Kubrick** by William Coyle ($24) has just been issued.

The other series, the "Twayne Theatrical Arts" edited by Warren French, was recently increased by eleven volumes. Each includes a concise statement on the purpose and significance of the study, followed by a chronology listing notable accomplishments, major works and relevant historic developments. The text proper is an in depth analysis and an assessment of the director's films. Stills, notes and references, a bibliography, a filmography and an index complete each volume.

In this series, we find **Sam Peckinpah** by Doug McKinney ($9.95), **Mike Nichols** by H. Wayne Schuth (10.95), **François Truffaut** by Annette Insdorf (8.95), **Luis Bunuel** by Virginia Higginbotham ($10.95), **Joseph Losey** by Foster Hirsch (12.95), **Billy Wilder** by Bernard F. Dick ($9.95), **Abel Gance** by James Michael Welsh & Steven Philip Kramer ($9.50) , **Anthony Mann** by Jeanine Basinger ($10.95), **Ken Russell** by Gene D. Phillips ($9.95), **René Clair** by Celia McGerr ($12.95) and **Laurence Olivier** by Foster Hirsch ($10.95).

Other recent books about directors include four from N.Y. Zoetrope (31 E. 12 St., NYC 10010): **Ophuls** edited by Paul Willemen, presents a variety of assessments of Max Ophuls' films, their origins, motivations, politics and esthetics ($4.95); **Sternberg**, edited by Peter Baxter, charts the director's progress in his craft and his own perception of his role in shaping Marlene Dietrich's career ($19/$9.50) ; **The Films of Helmuth Costard**, edited by Jan Dawson, examines the work of the "enfant terrible" of the New German Cinema ($3.50) and **Anthropology — Reality — Cinema**, edited by Mick Eaton, devoted to the films of Jean Rouch ($5.75).

In **The Rivals of D.W. Griffith,** Richard Koszarski describes the contribution, between 1914 and 1918, of Griffith's lesser known contemporaries, such as Marshall Neilan, Benjamin Christensen, Reginald Baker, Charles Swickard, Scott Sidney, Raymond B. West, Louis Feuillade, and John Collins, as well as Ford, DeMille, Chaplin, Stiller, and Sjöstrom (N.Y. Zoetrope $4.95).

Essays on such Italian directors as Luchino Visconti, Michelangelo Antonioni, Roberto Rosselini and Vittorio de Sica are collected in **Springtime in Italy**, a study of neo-realism in films edited by David Overby. The basic ideas of this movement, the single most important in post-World War II cinema, are vigorously promoted in these articulate writings (Ungar $15).

Charles Higham's classical study, **Cecil B. DeMille**, emphasizes the artistic aspect of the director's epic productions in contrast with the general notion of a shrewd exploitation of popular tastes (Da Capo $7.95).

Leading Soviet film directors and performers are profiled in **Who's Who In Soviet Cinema**, an informative description of the careers of 70 top personalities. This substantial book, edited by Galina Dolmatovskaya and Irina Shilova, also provides valuable insights into the Soviet film industry, and its functioning on artistic and administrative levels (Imported Publications, 320 W. Ohio, Chicago, Il 60610; $12.50).

The Reference Shelf

An established, authoritative and reliable reference text now in its 7th edition, **Halliwell's Filmgoer's Companion**, is a basic information source on movie matters. Over 10,000 revised and updated entries cover every facet of the cinema world — biographical data on leading personalities, notable films, techniques old and new, movie genres are handled by Leslie Halliwell with his customary intelligence and expertise (Scribners $39.50).

A stimulating reinterpretation of the origins of British cinema by Michael Chanan, **The Dream That Kicks**, investigates film production, distribution and exhibition during the first quarter of this century. Chanan's forceful and documented thesis points up the close relationship between the evolution of the film industry and the changes in the socio-economic structure of the country (Routledge & Keegan Paul $32.50).

Significant material on the overwhelmingly distorted depiction of North American aborigines in the visual media is assembled in **The Pretend Indians: Images of Native Americans in the Movies**. This well documented exposé by Gretchen N. Bataille and Charles L.P. Silet offers abundant instances of racial bias, and outlines remedies for this continuing situation (Iowa U. Press $19.95/ $9.95).

An extensive sampler of sayings by film celebrities, **The Book of Hollywood Quotes** has been diligently compiled by Gary Herman. It offers a wide range of statements — sometimes wise, often humorous, mostly acerbic and always revealing — providing an uninhibited scan of life and work in the film capital (Quick Fox $5.95).

Culled from numerous movies, excerpts of memorable dialogue, witty remarks or emotional outbursts are collected in **The Movie Quote Book**, edited by Harry Haun. Some 4000 such instances are reprinted in this entertaining book, a welcome opportunity for fond recognition and intellectual stimulation (Harper & Row $22).

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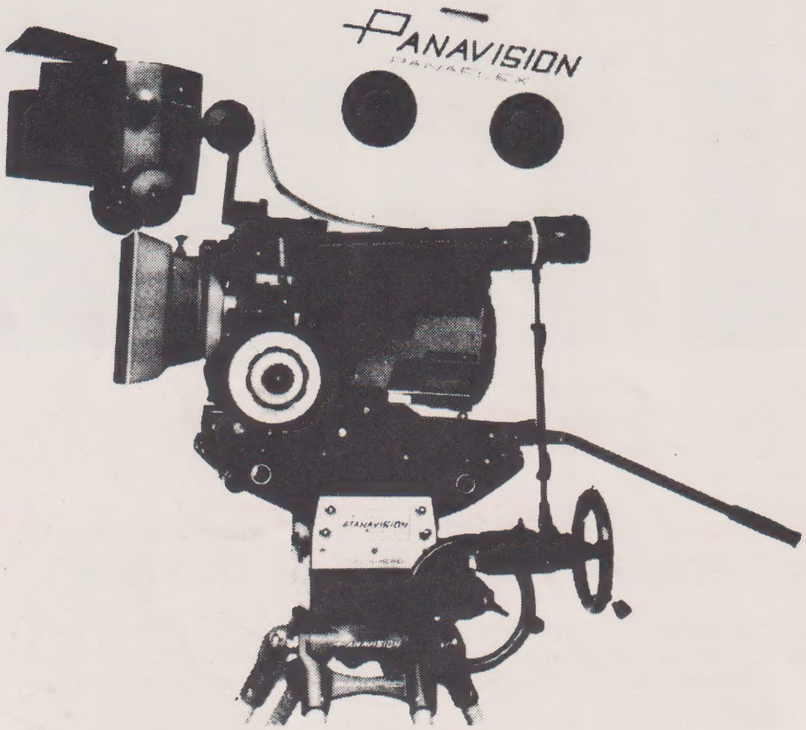

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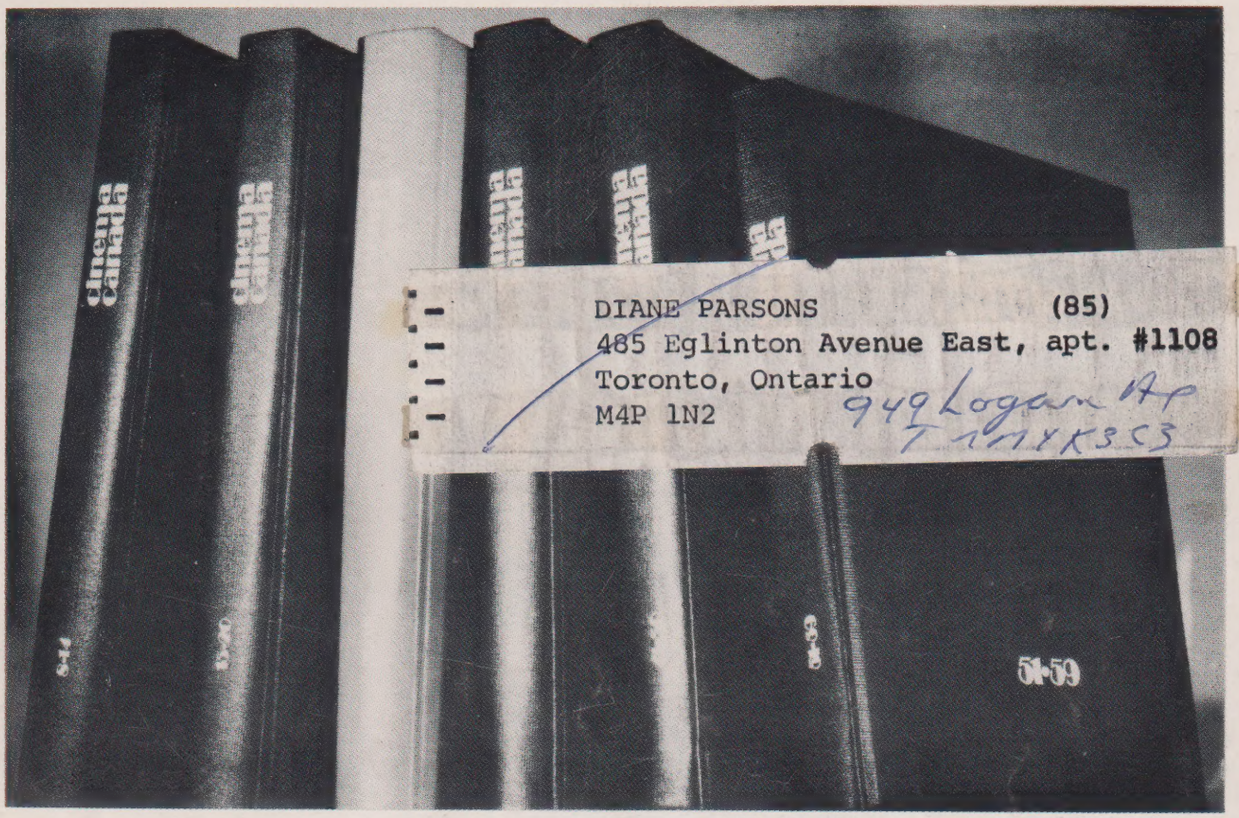

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